

AINSLIE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

FEB. 1

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ART DESIGN BY
W. DITZLER

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February
1923

AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

Vol. L
No. 6

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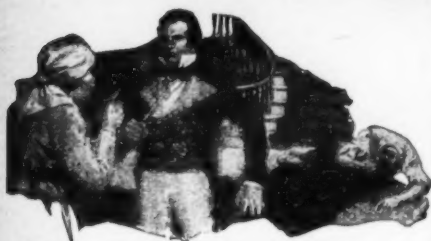
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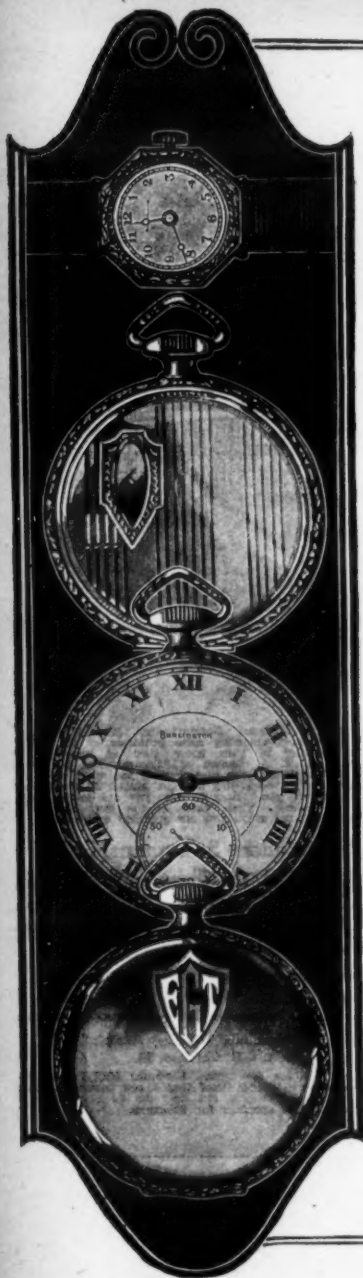
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AINSLEE'S

VOL. L.

FEBRUARY, 1923.

No. 6.

S u m m o n e d

By Katharine Newlin Burt

Author of "The Branding Iron,"
"Snow Blind," etc.



CHAPTER I.

GEORGE FERGUSON stopped on the last landing of the stairs. Until that instant he had believed that the expectant stillness, the patience of the spacious room below and of its solitary occupant, were being held for him, but now—and it was the shock of the sensation that brought him to a pause—he received a curiously definite impression of something alien and hostile. He was a man sensitive to such disturbances.

The firelight, a scattered, varying glimmer, touched at polished points of the dimness; it lay along the piano keys, across the dull-gold frame of his grandfather's portrait, on the silver borders of his own notable etching, that study of a crouching tiger which, with the tiger's skin, he had brought back from his latest trip to India; it sharpened the slender blades of his rapiers crossed with his fencing mask above the bookcases.

Rosamund Kerr was just beyond the remotest stretch of the finger tips of moving light. He could, however, with his extraordinary gift of vision, readily

distinguish her, sitting in profile against a black, uncurtained window: by the gleam of her hair, by the tawny color of her evening gown where it clung to the round end of her shoulder and to the long sweep of her leg from hip to knee. She was sitting wonderfully still, a tall, golden woman against the square of visible night. There was a primitive perfection of stillness in her unbreathing fixity that kept Ferguson as motionless as he had been held in the jungle by the first sight of a stalked beast.

The indigo background, in the center of which the golden head rested, to the eye as flat and dim as a faded fresco, broke into metallic brilliance, so that the face started out in dazzling relief, half-open, scarlet mouth, clean-cut, dilated nostrils, eyelashes black and steady, white brow, glittering, fixed eyes, white cheeks, white chin, the neck as round as a post, the hair in every shining, wire-bright thread—then went out as utterly as the sudden, blinding dazzle. It glimmered again slowly to Ferguson's disturbed vision.

Neither the lightning flash, nor the

prompt and violent detonation that followed had moved her by so much as a single contracted nerve. She seemed, rather, to be staring at the storm as though it had a face. The wind came at the glass and flung rain; there went a sort of trembling and trampling over the big, steady house. The branches of elms outside in the lawn were audibly lashed, tiny leaves scattered with the rain, against the window.

Ferguson himself had started at the flash, but if his slight movement had made any sound, it evidently had not distracted her from whatever her contemplation might be. Now, however, she stood up and with one vigorous movement threw the window wide. The storm entered the quiet, beautiful room: cold swept Ferguson's body; he felt his sleek hair ruffled eerily; the fire leaped, papers fluttered, the pictures swayed on the walls, the rain drummed audibly on the polished floor. Ferguson heard the sea shout along the beach. For his further revelation, the lightning painted her in and out—her dress blown close against her, her throat glistening wet.

He closed his lids, opened them. She had moved again even more resolutely and swiftly. She looked about her, but after the flash her eyes missed his still, dark figure, and, leaving the window open, she ran across the room. Before he could cry out, as he had at last a mind to do, she had thrown open the heavy, double front door, and, uncloaked, bare-headed, bare-armed, was outside in the storm.

Ferguson sprang across the room, closed the window, caught up a long wrap, and, heedless of his own uncovered head, dinner coat, and light shoes, plunged out, bending his forehead to the rain. He shut the door heavily behind him. With that loss of the warmth and shelter of walls, he was conscious of the instantaneous change and readjustment which takes place in every civilized being when he steps out from home into night:

an increase both of robustness and of timidity; a wary, adventuring, exciting shift of values. As he stepped across the deep veranda he had changed from host to hunter. The wild night possessed him as it possessed the trees and clouds and sea.

He stood peering under his brows and the lightning granted him a glimpse of his quarry flying along the edge of the lawn and flashing away beneath a fringe of viridescent beech trees which gleamed against a deeper belt of fire. Beyond the trees Ferguson knew that the land rose steeply to a cliff above the water. As he ran across wet, clipped grass he could hear the pounding of excited surf, and the rattle of stones which Rosamund's climbing feet had loosened.

There were in him now three distinct strata of sensation; most recognizable, the shock of indignant surprise which he endured that such a woman as Rosamund, bred and trained to her finger tips, a creature of so complete and, in its best sense, worldly an education that her every thought was a nuance, her every speech obviously the result of delicate, complicated thought, her every act one of poised, almost studied gracefulness, should change under his eyes to a tawny, supple hoyden who ran half dressed against the wind with flying hair.

Almost as vividly he was conscious of a growing dread, a suspicion, angry and pained, that there must be something in Rosamund's life of which he had never been aware, some emotional disturbance, some repressed unhappiness, some tragedy perhaps, which on the very eve of his proposal had sent her climbing away from him at top speed to the windy, dangerous head of rock. But, stirring under the disgust of the hyper-civilized man and the dread of the lover, there was another feeling. The hunter's instinct in Ferguson was tingling his veins. He understood, by some deep-buried instinct, understood and approved the flight of his golden-tawny prey.

She had sat there waiting for his courtship, a composed gentlewoman, dressed and groomed and graciously prepared, and the storm wind had called and called until she knew that she was afraid and angry and filled with insufferable delight and that she must run. And he, angry, too, throbbing, his teeth set, was after her with strong, swift feet, stronger and swifter than hers. It was—this hunting of a wet, wild-haired, running girl—the most exultant hunting of them all.

George Ferguson, hurrying across the lawn in dinner clothes with a wrap over his arm, would have described himself as an indignant rescuer of a young woman foolish enough to go out into a storm to look at the surf. He had never felt like scolding Rosamund before, he had a perfectly conscious mind now to scold her strenuously, but, not yet conscious, there was that in him that would have beaten her half to death and dragged her home by the hair.

He came after a few minutes to the top of the cliff and here the wind smote him with force, his tongue tasted salt spray and he must fight for his footing before he could look about him. She was standing full against the wind, her breast high, her arms held back, her hair whipped out straight.

"Rosamund! Rosamund!" he called, but she could not hear against the noise of the wind and the sea, and not till he put his arms strongly about her did she stir with the knowledge of his presence, angry, protective, arrogant. He had himself instantly in control, himself and her. "Keep this wrap around you. Be careful. It's dangerous up here in this wind." As he spoke they both staggered a step nearer to the edge and he fairly caught her up and swept her down out of the dizzy sight of crawling whiteness so far beneath them. Among the groaning trees she went with him, held close to his side so that his arm kept the warm cloak about her. He

could feel the swift, rippling strength of her walk. They said nothing until, on the veranda, she pulled back.

"George—let me go!" It was an emotional voice. He tightened his arm brutally, then suddenly withdrew it, fighting an enormous reluctance to free her, and followed her into the house.

She hurried before him up the whole length of the room to the fire, before which she bent, holding out her wet hands.

She tried to arrange her darkened hair, then stood up, looked at him helplessly, laughed, and, half turning away against the mantel, broke into hysterical tears.

CHAPTER II.

Rosamund's tears were the violent expression of a nervous readjustment. Out on the cliff, with the wind in her face, she had been happy and composed; now, with George Ferguson drawn up, white-faced, beside her and with the quiet, dim room as silent and as full of unspoken criticism, about her, she was ashamed of her extraordinary impulse, of its expression, of the humiliation of capture and enforced return, of her weeping and disordered self. Not since her stormy, silent little-girlhood had she suffered any such public mortification, and that her public should be the man whom she intended to marry and whose opinion was of paramount importance to her helped to confound her more completely.

She wished quite simply that he would speak a word of reassurance, instead of standing under the high mantel like a modern caryatid, in slim, conventional perfection of physique, of dress, of pose. He was, in mind and body, as keen and exquisite as one of his own rapier toys and, she sometimes felt, as essentially dangerous. But his brilliant and witty eyes were now kind enough, and anxious. He must be at least as bewildered as she was herself. And she

could understand very completely the shock it must have been to him to see her so at odds with her usual self-control.

She commanded her sobbing, smoothed back her hair almost into its accustomed knot, and ordered her damp gown, which, being of plain and heavy brocade, had suffered very little from its misadventure. She then moved deliberately to a high-backed chair and seated herself in it, with what she assured herself must be a fair imitation of her customary, half-smiling composure. He turned to her expectantly, without otherwise changing his position, which seemed, to her nervous fear of him, to dominate the whole big room.

"Was it anything I said or did?" he asked abruptly, his pleasant voice shaken from its more familiar timbre. "Was it to escape—*me*, Rosamund?"

She rested her hands along the carved arms of her throne, her finger tips bending into the mouths of the two snarling little lions. She was glad of the smooth solidity of their support, for she was still trembling, and found her voice hurried and uneven.

"I particularly dislike explaining myself, George, but I'm quite ready to admit the necessity, this time." Her speech had its usual self-possessed twist, expressive of pride and of a certain ironical common sense, a certain readiness to laugh at pretensions, even her own. "It wasn't, of course, to escape you that I ran out. At least"—she drew her eyebrows together in the effort to be honest, more with herself than with him—"I can't believe that it was that. I knew that you were coming to talk to me—" She paused and her young blood, which could not be trained as were her carriage and her speech, swept rapidly across her cheeks. She lowered her wide, white eyelids.

"You knew also, of course, what I was going to ask?" he put in quietly.

"Yes." She looked up and smiled at

him, brushing back her wet, slippery hair. "You didn't quite know me, did you, George? There are, you see—well, I have impulses—there are wildnesses in me. I believe I am really less civilized than you are, George; perhaps women are never quite so civilized as men. I must tell you about myself, I see, though it's what I particularly dislike doing. I am, as you know, a very secret young person. But, before you speak to me of anything else, I believe I owe you a self-revelation—of sorts!"

She began to study him carefully and perhaps a little wistfully, though wistfulness was very far from being one of her characteristic moods or expressions. He faced her still with his usual composure, his color a trifle heightened. He was not an easy confidant, probably because he was gifted with such rapid, unerring discernment and interpretation that confidences between him and the people he loved were rarely necessary. She had talked with him, during their long intimacy, of everything under the sun, even of herself and of him, but they had never confessed themselves. There had always been a sensitive reticence. They had never indulged in "scenes;" this was the first time he had discovered her in tears.

It was characteristic of her instinct for self-defense that she should begin her confession with an inquiry.

"Did you ever, George—I can't imagine it—but did you ever have an overwhelming desire to fight something?"

At this he smiled brilliantly and very sweetly, and she hurried on, at once emboldened and confused.

"Oh, but I don't think you know just what I mean. Ever since I was a child I've had the most violent, irresistible seizures of this feeling. It's as if"—she put one hand quickly across her breast—"something pushed up from far, far down in my body—my heart, well, I suppose, in strict accuracy, my brain,

and made me mad to run out, to struggle with strong things, wild things, to come close to rough, real things. Yes, to work, to fight, to—to love"—her voice dropped anxiously and bravely, and through her flush she kept her honest eyes on his—"with my hands, with my body."

"In other words," he answered painstakingly, and now she saw, with surprise, that, far from smiling, he, too, was deeply flushed, "to work and fight and love like a beast." His eyebrows, very black and definite, drew together into a formidable knot where a straight, deep furrow showed itself angrily.

"Would that be it?" She widened her eyes and twisted her mouth protestingly.

"After all," he went on harshly, "the beast had sixty million years or so of life to the petty twenty hundred of the creature we call civilized man. Sixty million years! I don't suppose we've built up much of a barrier against him—and his habits. He's had to crouch a little, perhaps, as his quarters were narrowed, but he's strong. Sometimes I think he's stronger for that enforced confinement. I mean that if a civilized man or woman deliberately summons him, as you've been doing, he comes like a tiger, in tenfold devilry. Don't call back the beast, Rosamund. I've seen him—civilized men and women, that is, who have summoned him. And it's not a good thing to see. They are beasts with a vengeance. They've learned how to be bestial consciously, with skill."

She was shocked by the impact of his words and when he came over to her she drew herself away almost angrily, but, at that, he took possession of her, kneeling with his arms about her, and spoke, with his lips touching her cheek.

"Rosamund—I love you. There's a beast in my love. We need all the barrier we can put up against him. If he's in you, he's in me, too. I felt him when you ran away from me. Love me like

a woman, Rosamund, if you can and will."

She fell against him then, broken and soft, her heart melting into the simplicity of a real love. They spoke a little in doubtful sentences; they learned to know each other's lips.

Gradually, of necessity, they came back to a realization of the empty, watchful room, whose very shelter meant restraint. At her slight movement of awareness he drew himself up and she, too, rose. It was very dim; the fire had fallen to embers. She could just see his eyes. The storm was over and the night was very sweet and still. She felt its presence, wistful and banished, a pressure against the walls, the windows, a sigh across the threshold of the closed door.

"You've spoiled your beautiful gown," he said softly.

"No." Awareness of the night dropped away, the embers were no longer a fire under the sky. She felt dizzy and confused. "But I must change, and fix my hair. Your mother must never see the beast, George. Hush! Let me go—my dearest. Some one is coming."

She went swiftly up the stairs and unwillingly he was again reminded of the supple, flying wildness of her.

The servant came in and, with the soundless precision of an oiled machine, drew the curtains close and turned on the few, well-shaded lights.

CHAPTER III.

"After all," Lilith Dickensens complained, "it's the unexpected that always happens, isn't it?"

Rosamund smiled the indolent, sweet-tempered smile with which she received the sallies of her women friends—none of them very intimate, but all of them, particularly this friend, proud to imagine an intimacy.

"You sound rather disappointed by my—expectedness, Lil!"

Lilith turned and peered, bright-eyed under the small brim of her hat and between the clumps of coppery, henna-tinted hair, at Rosamund. Both faces against the buff-colored lining of Lilith's limousine, which she had acquired with her latest and richest husband, looked artificially high-colored, like faces painted upon a silk fan: Lilith's obviously because of rouge, powder, dye, eyebrow plucking, and a natural extravagance of feature, Rosamund's because of the extraordinary natural contrasts of blond hair, black lashes, gray eyes, white skin, and a very slightly touched-up carmine mouth. The two women had round, vigorous chins and long throats, but Lilith's swayed and thrust forward so that her head suggested now a tropical blossom, now a snake's, while Rosamund's was drawn up in a fashion that had much to do with her reputation for dignity, if not—on the unfavorable tongue—for arrogance.

"Not very much disappointed," Lilith went on when she discovered that nothing could be made of Rosamund's smiling serenity. "Since you couldn't shock us out of our senses, you've done the next best thing, I suppose, by justifying our prophecy. Those are the only two ways of holding an audience. I happened to choose the first, but I'm beginning to believe, and to admit to *you*, that the second method is not only the safer, but the surer. Of course the world hoped that you would run away with a chauffeur or go into a convent and that George Ferguson would turn squaw man or defy New York with a Zulu bride, but, since you are obviously made for each other and since we've all been saying so ever since you met three years ago, why, let me wish you joy, my dear—which is what I've been trying to do ever since I kidnaped you."

Again Rosamund smiled and drew

from her neck the small fur, oppressive under the warmth of a June sun which radiated along Fifth Avenue, softening its asphalt beneath the tires of Lilith's car and sending through the air a searching smell of tar and dust. The pedestrians walked slowly, keeping as much as possible to the shady side of the street. Until five minutes before Rosamund had been a pedestrian herself. But Lilith, emerging from a shop, had swept her into the waiting car with its smart chauffeur.

She was perfectly conscious—was Lilith—of having captured a prize, and poignantly aware of the fact that Rosamund was probably the only young girl of her acquaintance who would have risked being seen in her company and who could do so with complete impunity. Rosamund's position was unassailable, the reputed correctness of her behavior not to be shaken by a friendship, which had blossomed a few months before, with an outcast such as Lilith had very definitely become, since her second divorce and her third marriage.

When Rosamund, after smiling and removing the small fur, put out her hand and pressed Lilith's, the elder woman moistened her lips, which for a painful instant straightened.

"I suppose," she murmured, looking aside and blinking rapidly, "that it's all up with me now, Rosie!"

The blood flew across Rosamund's face.

"What do you mean?"

"That George will hardly countenance—well, let's put it, tentatively—our Western trip."

"That was a promise made before my promise to him, and what you imply as to any interference with my friendships and undertakings on George's part is absurd, Lil. You ought to know me better. And when you know *him* better—by the bye, come with me to his apartment now! He happens to be in town this week. I want you to see his

studio and I want, if I may, to invite him to your party to-night."

"Oh, my dear, he'll hate it so—and me! I'm afraid of your George Ferguson."

"Do you think him so inhuman, so critical?"

"Very correct, at least. Very civilized. Compared to him, I am raw material indeed."

"Do you feel that? He is civilized, but then we all are, aren't we? Of course, if you'd rather not have him to-night—"

"But, my dear, I'd adore it. I'd be flattered. Only, it's an odd place and some of us are odd people. I think he won't approve of us."

"You can't think him a prig, Lilith! This is his street. I think I'll have to get you quickly acquainted with George. I don't like what you say of him. There are very few corners of the earth that would seem odd or shocking to George."

"Oh, but with us?" Lilith murmured, and Rosamund, laughing, advised the chauffeur to stop and, with a pleasant air of excited anticipation, she left the motor, followed by an interested, but reluctant companion.

George's city quarters were at the top of a tall studio building in a street of fashionable apartment houses, and the two women found themselves in a charming room, where they were told by a mysteriously smiling Japanese manservant to wait. Rosamund ignored the suggestion. With a natural wish to see George for a few preparatory moments alone, she left Lilith and wandered through two smaller rooms to the doors of the studio, from behind which came to her curiosity a strange thudding and bounding noise with audible breathing.

She opened the door and quickly shut it again, both actions noiselessly accomplished, and turned away a flushed, startled, and smiling face. George and another man, both stripped to the waist and armed with boxing gloves, had been

absorbed in a pugilistic bout. She had seen them only for a flash, but the clean, white beauty of her lover, his long, rippling muscles, his forward lunge, the fierce concentration of his face, had revealed to her a possibility for emotion such as she had never before consciously experienced. She stood, therefore, turned from the door, the startled smile fixed on her face, and felt her blood go pounding to her cheeks, her finger tips.

Thought of her marriage in its essential relation startled her imagination, hitherto directed so perpetually into other channels, of culture, of communal activity, of family affection, of social seemliness. This man, to her nice knowledge and perception of him, had always been elaborately clothed in his correctness, in the fame of his exploits, of his varying proficiencies, of his family name, his wealth, his tender courtesy to her. The unexpected glimpse of half-clothed, energetic, fierce masculinity shocked her screened senses.

A moment later she heard the Japanese servant's announcement, the cessation of combat, and George's hurried withdrawal into another room. It was a matter of ten minutes before he threw open the studio doors and, seeing her, shut them again and stood against them, eager, clean from a rapid shower bath, ruddy with toweling, sleek, and brushed. She faltered to him, her eyes lowered, and put her face to his, and, after their kiss, he smiled down at her, his color deepened.

"You love me more than usual today, Rosa Mundi. Why?"

She felt that she had betrayed herself and moved away.

"Lilith Dickens is with me. She's in the front room. And, George, do accept her invitation for to-night. She's going to ask you—it's for a silly party. We're going to some restaurant on one of the avenues, I think, not exactly a reputable place and certainly a rough

one. The party was got up for me in joke, a very bad joke, about my never having seen the seamy side and being afraid of reality—some such nonsense, so I can't get out of it without being a short sport. I'd be much happier if you'd come."

"Of course I'll come. I shouldn't like you to go without me."

"And, George, do be nice to Lilith, won't you? I mean—especially nice. I'm very sorry for her. This last divorce of hers put her through fearful and, I do think, undeserved suffering. She fancied that the world would forgive her again. And it hasn't. She's terribly alone and sensitive. It's because of her nerves, you know, that she's been ordered West to camp life in the open, and for some reason the prospect terrifies her."

"So that she must drag you along as a shield against the wilderness! I do resent that Western trip. It's put off our wedding. Oh, all right, all right. I'll be gentle with her!"

He was, in fact, quite inscrutably gentle, leading Lilith, nervously chattering and admiring to hide her fear of him, into his studio, letting her examine his etchings of wild-bird life and comment with such fragments of art lore as she had managed to collect. Rosamund saw the little crossed, bright blades of malicious humor in his eyes, but they were not twinkled at Lilith.

"What a curious sketch of Rosie!"

George gave a smothered exclamation, then shrugged. In her busy circumambulation of the room Lilith had unearthed a study which was both recognizable and startling as a likeness of Rosamund Kerr—in silhouette against a dark window, sitting with the strained stillness of a wary animal—wide-eyed, with parted lips and tense, long fingers.

"But that's not Rosamund at all! Not my idea of her, not any one's idea of her, Mr. Ferguson!"

"Not even mine," laughed George

easily, but the deep, perpendicular fold had appeared between his eyebrows and Rosamund, with a wifely wisdom, coaxed Lilith away.

The invitation for the slum party was given and accepted and Lilith drifted out and down the hall toward the elevator, leaving the lovers to an instant of murmured confidence.

"You don't hate her?" asked Rosamund wistfully.

"Hate *that*! It's very small, timid game!"

"Timid? Lilith?"

"Yes. It has no body. Its processes stop at its neck."

"Lilith?" repeated Rosamund. "Three marriages!"

"Exactly"—George chuckled wickedly, his witty, good-looking face assuming the aspect of a naughty demon—"the way you pinch your numbness to find out if your arm is really frozen. Lilith's adventures are pinches, desperate efforts to achieve sensation. It's only ultra-civilization that drives people to such extravagance of behavior. Don't look so startled, Rosie. I've given you something to think about, haven't I?"

She did think about his analysis at intervals all day, sometimes with annoyance, sometimes with amusement, and always with that glow the stolen look into his privacy had roused in her, and she was again busy with his description when Lilith, as hostess, welcomed her that night to a crowded automobile. George would meet them at the café itself, she said, her vivid, white face greedy with its anticipation of excitement.

To Rosamund's critical detachment this greed seemed the typical state of mind of the human contents of the car: two women, herself the third, and two men. There was Dickens, younger than his new wife, a man with a plump body, a moon face, a mustache like a dot above his Cupid-bow mouth, prominent eyes, and a tone of delightful, if

reckless, whimsicalities. There was Kitty Malleson, a maiden of uncertain age, of long-forgotten chaperonage, of careless parentage, and of ultra-excitable manners. She was extravagantly thin so that her scant dress seemed pasted upon her, back to front, a doll effect heightened by Fiji-Islander hair and jerky motions of head and limbs. There was Miller, a red-faced, sandy man of portly and exuberant middle age, "beau-ing" Kitty and leaving an equally energetic wife at a ball to do so; a man of easy kindness to his own desires and other people's. Rosamund took a fancy to him because he was a gentleman and she thought George knew him. She managed to say so and to receive confirmation, this exchange of fact being the only bit of sense spoken during the riot of exclamatory innuendo which occupied them to their destination.

When they climbed out Rosamund found herself on a narrow and dirty pavement in a narrow and dirty side street, where all life, domestic and social, seemed to be expressing itself out of doors or in luridly lighted basements, and where the limousine instantly attracted a rather gruesomely attentive crowd. Rosamund was glad to see George advancing from a doorstep.

He performed the necessary civilities and told Lilith, with a certain restrained grimness:

"I've engaged a table for your party. We'd better be fairly quiet in there."

"In there" was an interior, dramatically charged with hostility. The Dickens party was isolated in its corner, isolated and pilloried to missiles of hatred, ridicule, muttered obscenities. As she took her place Rosamund felt stung with the shame of this intrusion. She was almost in sympathy with their antagonists. The way such people as these amused themselves, the places of their amusement, should be mercifully no-thoroughfare to such as she.

"This is too—disgusting, our coming

here," she murmured to George, who obstinately kept himself beside her.

"Isn't it?" he whispered, then aloud to Lilith: "I've ordered, Mrs. Dickens. I took the liberty."

Even his accentuated gravity failed long to restrain the merriment of Lilith, Kitty, and their escorts. As is the way of such folk, born and bred to indiscretion and selfishness, they made far too audible remarks. The dancing, in which they presently joined, provoked laughter and disgust, the food was execrable, the waiter's hands were filthy, the man drinking alone at the nearest table, a monster.

"He's a prize fighter," George confided to Rosamund, who looked pale and proud in her discomfort and offense, "and probably a very decent animal. He's as ugly as a bulldog, of course, has the ears and nose of his trade; but he's clean—look at the back of his neck. There's even a certain beauty in him. The crowd that looks ugly to me is at the table we passed on the way in. Miss Malleson jumped away when the girl touched her dress. Very bad medicine, that was. She's been snarling at us like an angry ape ever since. Rosamund, can't you persuade them to cut it short? There—look!"

He half rose as he spoke. Kitty, dancing with Dickens, had come into violent, not accidental collision with a couple of which the feminine partner was the tawdry, hollow-eyed girl Kitty had offended, the man a cadaverous creature, yellow-toothed, sullen.

"By Jove!" said George. "We'll have to get out of this."

He went to the middle of the floor, addressed a few gravely apologetic remarks to the girl, who was stamping and chattering, and to the man, who was shouldering, fisting, and shifting his feet in the manner of a dog working himself up to a fight. The girl, having listened to George, leered and spat in his face.

"Dickens, get out—and get them

all out, will you? I'll settle the bill. Collect your wife and Miller, *pronto!*" George threw this at his host.

They had already collected themselves and Miller persuasively, his big, jolly face doing good service, coaxed a passage to the door, Kitty and the Dickensens following in suddenly sobered docility. George hurried back to the table where Rosamund sat with an excellent, counterfeit composure.

"Good!" George complimented her. "You've got a head. Here, waiter, I'll settle."

The waiter, receiving his tip, bent to George's ear sideways and spoke out of the corner of a pale, thick mouth.

"You better git the lady out, sir. Looks ugly to me."

In fact, between them and the door a small mob, cheated of their prey by the prompt obedience of Dickens and Miller to George's advice, were now concentrating their ugly interest in the remaining pair.

"We'll have to force a way out," Rosamund said, rising and looking into George's eyes. Her own were alight and fierce. She was smiling slightly.

He measured the knot of men and women and his face became for an instant a mask of sheer distaste. Rosamund saw him glance down at his hands. He looked slowly about, then turned to the prize fighter seated just behind them, who had been watching their predicament with a look of lazy and detached anticipation.

George touched his shoulder and said something. The man grinned, without otherwise moving a muscle.

"For half of that, gove'nor," he said, and rose.

"Keep just to the left of me, in front, Rose," whispered George.

"What—" she began, but, at his look, she held her peace and allowed herself to be pushed forward behind the fighter, while George encircled her with his left arm and shoulder, keeping

his right arm free. She felt the rippling of his body and his light, easy breathing. There was a sort of shuffling, a sudden clamor in front of them. They were jostled. Rosamund smelled foul breath. Involuntarily, seeing the faces thrusting so close, she shut her eyes. It was like a swift passage down rapids, the tumult and the danger, ahead, about, behind, never touching her easy progress, and at last she was shot out into the street, where George and the big rescuer pulled her at a sharp run along the alley and round a corner out into a broadly lighted avenue. George turned to his male companion and a rustling, clinking transaction took place, after which the man, his tongue in his cheek, shouldered himself peaceably away.

"We won't crowd you, Mrs. Dickens," said George, when they had come up to the limousine waiting a few steps ahead, with Dickens craning anxiously from its door and a policeman in detached attendance. "I'll get a taxi for Rosamund and myself and take her home."

In the taxi a few minutes later George laughed sardonically and made a comment on "such parties."

"I fancy they've learned their lesson," he said, then turned sharply to Rosamund. She was sitting still and tense, her face averted from him, looking out of the window. "What's the matter, Rosamund?"

She answered in a low, ruthless voice: "I can't help it, George. I hate what you did."

He looked inquiring merely, and bewildered.

"What I did?"

"In there. In order to escape. You bought a man to take on the fight for you."

He leaned forward to look closely into her face, then drew himself back a little and laughed again, by no means good-temperedly.

"Do you think I was afraid?"

"I almost wish you had been! But it wasn't that. You didn't want to touch them with your hands. You bought yourself off."

"Quite so. There's nothing in the acquirement of privilege, if you can't buy yourself out of drudgery and filthy or brutal contacts. Are you a shirker because you pay the cook and the garbage man, Rosamund?"

"This is different. He had to take blows. I heard them."

"And you would rather have heard—me taking them?"

"Almost I would. Yes."

"I *can* fight, you know," he drawled, "if I have to."

"I know. I saw you. Boxing. Why do you do that?"

"To keep my body in soberness, temperance, and chastity," he quoted, "I suppose. To be ready in case of need. I saw a better way out to-night. Listen, Rosamund, you are a child, after all, for all the beauty of you and the dignity. If I had crashed my fingers against those faces"—he held out to her under the passing lights his long, steady, right hand, shapely, well-kept, and strong—"I'd not be able to finish the wild geese to-morrow. It wouldn't have been worth it."

"Not in my defense?" Rosamund murmured and then, sensitive to his frankly delighted laughter, she capitulated. "Oh, I suppose I am absurd!"

"And I thought my defense of you was rather more complete than it could otherwise have been!" he protested. She found herself reconciled to him and to his conduct, but, with the concession to cool-headed sanity, that queer, new glow left her and because of its loss the Rosamund of humor and self-possession seemed to her more experienced consciousness a cold, restrained Rosamund, curiously numbed.

She graciously received George's good night kiss and admitted to herself that

he had been, probably always would be, magnanimous.

CHAPTER IV.

The trail, to tired pack horses, patient guides, and frightened Lilith Dickensens, seemed to drag itself out forever in its giddy journey down the cañon side. Since early morning they had been following it from far up, where the cañon opened out to the exploring energy, and now, late in the afternoon, it was visible ahead of them in long, swinging loops, bending sharply about alarming corners, reappearing below or above without a promise of camping ground, of feed, of water. Lilith rode, for the most part, with her eyes shut or turned aside, her hands gripping the horn of her saddle.

In one respect the specialist's recommended trip had been justified: Lilith had definitely exchanged one set of apprehensions for another, probably more violent. In the East she had been absorbed in a sensitive shrinking from slights and innuendoes; here she was much more absorbed in stark fear, brutal dizziness, and a thankful exhaustion every night that she had not fallen or been thrown to her death. She suffered indescribable torments, besides, of heat and cold and offended niceties.

Her hot-water bottle had been broken early in the trip; her small, soft pillow had been lost at one of the camps, her permanent wave had proved a broken promise, her face was burned past doctoring, and, worst of all, she had definitely lost touch with Rosamund, who seemed to her a stranger. For, to Rosamund, the trail was a thread on which she strung dreamily jewel after jewel of impersonal, exciting experiences—impressions, rather, that were like experiences—of light and shadow, of height and depth, of sound and silence, of a sky serenely far above her, of a stream turbulently far below.

She rode as if she wished to feel

every possible inch of dangerous elevation, her eyes flashing about, her body erect. She liked to plunge her arrogant young vision down through tree tops beneath the steep side of the trail; she liked just as well to fling a glance up to the rocky towers painted against the blue above her and so to flavor an intense humility. In spite of the apprehensions and collapses and irritable humors of Lilith, and Rosamund's spasmodic efforts to encourage and restore her friend, she had never felt so profound and excited a well-being as had been hers since they had left the Idaho town to join the train of ten horses, and began to move into the wilderness.

She had, of course, missed George, but in the inverted fashion of wishing, not to be with him, but that he might be with her. This was the sort of thing George loved, but she wondered if he, artist and adventurer, loved it at all in her strange fashion. She fancied not. George would have been absorbed in observation, in humanizing, in composing everything. The guides, by now, would have been his intimates. He would have relished inexhaustibly their humor, their fund of horsy, woodsy, frontier talk. But neither wilderness nor man did she try to possess, or to surround; it seemed rather that something inhuman, solitary, almost desolate, was slowly possessing her. She was increasingly silent. She loved the work of camp, she loved the weariness of her muscles, the profoundness of her sleep under the open night; she loved to drift passively through showers and sun, to feel hot and cold, hungry and then replete, to sweat and to let the sweat dry on her body; she loved the naked plunges into icy streams, the scrubbing with soap and brush behind the shelter of thickets with the hot sun on her tingling skin, her damp hair lifting from her back under little cañon winds. She became less and less inclined to express her emotions, her mental processes.

While Lilith clung to the companionship of the guides as a substitute for all the social life she had been driven from and which was her inevitable medium, while she instinctively flattered their masculinity, coaxed their approval, coqueted with their susceptibilities, dressed for their admiration, sang and chattered for their entertainment, using the wilds for her green room, Rosamund grew less and less aware of them. They dropped, with their horses and their methodical, quiet business and their slow, game-wary voices, into the profound, murmurous silence of the world.

Sometimes, it is true, she did find herself in a listening, expectant attitude of mind, but this was, recognizably, not a desire for human communications, it was not even the guides' eternal preoccupation with the possible sound or sight of wild game. If the wilderness had speech, she would, in this attentive mood, be ready to listen; if it had a spiritual body, she would be ready to see. Sometimes for hours she sat so in her saddle, tense, her senses strung. But this afternoon the long, exciting monotony of their tiptoe progress had dulled this curious watchfulness; she was only vaguely conscious of anything beyond her physical sensations. She had even, for the last mile or so, been insensitive to the startling beauty of the place.

It was the red rock that brought her up with a start almost as of recognition. It stood a mile ahead across the cañon, at that point so narrow that a long arm, she felt, might have crossed it, and it marked a turn in the winding valley they had been following all day. It stood so straight and high that it caught the sunlight and sparkled like a ruby.

It had the shape of an old heathen god, a dog-faced god on an erect, idiosyncratic body, straight as a post. Or, it was perhaps more like a red finger, a signpost set up to point some one who knew the secret away from this trail to some less apparent destination. Rosa-

mund's attention was caught and held and satisfied. For a mile she rode with her eyes on the queer pinnacle, watched it gradually thicken and turn and show its roundness until, opposite it, she saw that it did indeed mark an abrupt division of the ways.

The stream at its base split sharply, the lesser body running nimbly about the red pedestal to follow a small and tumbled cañon that folded upon itself to a secret distance; the larger body of water keeping beneath their trail, which stretched away to the left, where the cañon sides opened out at last to a wide, lower country of sage and grazing land and distant snow peaks. So wonderfully startling was this turning point that even Lilith was moved.

"How perfectly beautiful!" she gasped, forgetting for an instant her perpetual terror of the next turn ahead.

Rosamund murmured something that sounded appreciative; she had become a past mistress of such murmurs. She called aloud, however, to the guide.

"Do you know that other cañon? Is there a trail?"

"No, ma'am. I don't think it's ever been follered. This country here's not been prospected any. The trail we're on is the only one they can tell you of. It ain't been traveled any recently—well, not ever very much. That country over yonder"—he stretched a hand toward the mountainous confusion back of the red, dog-headed rock—"is savage country. There ain't nobody down there. It's awful rough goin' to look at, lady."

"I can't bear to look at it at all," moaned Lilith. "How uncanny that red stone makes it look!"

"Kind of like a bear on its hind legs," grinned the younger guide. "Good landmark, ain't it?"

He addressed himself then to a pack horse, which had abruptly made up its mind during the brief halt to go back to last night's camp, and there followed a few moments of frantic confusion on

the trail. Lilith was trembling visibly by the time the pack train was in order.

"Aren't we ever going to make camp, Jimmie?" she waived.

"Yes, ma'am." The apparently unruffled horseman returned, smiling his often used, backward smile of reassurance, one gloved hand resting on the pony's steaming rump. "There's a little meadow down yonder by the stream that'll do, plenty food and a likely place to hold the hosses." He turned and the string moved forward, Lilith swaying dizzily and clinging again to the horn.

Rosamund saw nothing but the red rock. She was possessed by a compulsion to follow its pointing nose down that steep hollow into which the water ran with so stealthy an increase of its speed and whiteness. The sun had set away off there, just where the tumbled, narrow cañon folded into a complete secrecy. There was a threatening sky, clouds murky and flushed, a desolate flare of color. The rocks bristled in twisted forms against this confused and troubled sky.

It seemed to Rosamund that here was an entrance to some dream-traveled country. Or was it that the tall, red rock, the interpenetrating walls, the dark end, and the fatal sky symbolized an inner experience, some familiar thought process, subconsciously indefinable, but here expressed visibly, as words express thought, in confused earth and stone and cloud forms, exciting and desolate?

By the time she joined the others the lonely little meadow already showed signs of transformation into home. The guides had dismounted, the pack horses were tied and partly unpacked, an ax was ringing against prospective firewood. Only Lilith still sat on her pony, which had pulled his head free and was grazing at random. Rosamund sprang from her saddle and ran quickly over to the other woman's stirrup. A sick, white face swayed above her, twitching and distraught.

"Don't let them see me, Rosie," Lilith besought, speaking with great effort. "I—I'm not well. I can't get down." And at that she stumbled sideways against Rosamund, who eased her to the grass. Lilith came to her senses, if she had lost them, instantly, but only to give way to a terrible convulsion of crying. The elder guide ran at once for water, and, with the tact of his kind, left Rosamund to minister to the hysterical woman.

"I reckon," he said, "it was too hard a day's trip for her. She ain't strong and that was sure some trail!"

"Poor Lil! Dear little Lil!" Rosamund soothed and caressed until her exhausted friend lay quiet. Then she slipped a folded blanket under her head and brought a cup of hot coffee, freshly cooked.

"I'm just worn out with fright," Lilith smiled uncertainly. "This is all too wild and rough for me. And you don't mind it a bit, do you, Rosie? You like it, yet I'd have said you were a much more civilized person than I—back East. Oh, my dear, I don't see how I'm going to stand the rest of it!" And again she began to cry as pitifully as a terrified child.

"Don't think about the rest of it. Anyway, the worst is over. We get down into open country to-morrow. Drink your coffee and lie still. I believe we'd better stop here for a day or two so that you can rest. It was stupid of me not to see how you were feeling. Why didn't you call to me? Why didn't you ask for a halt?"

"A halt!" Lilith laughed shakily, brushing back the heavy, henna-tinted hair which now betrayed here and there a thread of white in the straightened locks. "There wasn't any place to halt. It was just keeping on and on and on, like a fly on the wall—'nine hours gone between hell and heaven!" The quotation and the laugh were reassuring, and

Rosamund went over to consult with Jimmie.

"Can we lay over," she asked, using his idiom unconsciously, "for a day or two so that Mrs. Dickens can rest?"

"Well, mebbe so. There might be enough feed to hold 'em." "Em" always stood for the horses. "She sure ought to get a rest." Then, looking up at his questioner from his squatting position above a frying pan, he added: "You ain't a mite tired yourself, are you, lady?"

Rosamund smiled and shook her head, flushing at his narrowing look. She was almost ashamed of her physical and mental exultation. It seemed unnatural and a little cruel toward Lilith.

"You're a kind of a wild one!" Jimmie muttered, watching her as she walked back, tall and slim in her riding breeches and flannel shirt, and, kneeling near her friend, began to shake out and brush her long, bright, blond hair.

CHAPTER V.

The next day, brilliantly sunny and still and warm in their sheltered camp, Lilith slept and the men loafed. After bathing in a pool, Rosamund spent several hours in dreamy contemplation; then, feeling her well-being increase to a need of action, she set out alone to explore, following on foot their trail down in the direction they would be traveling to-morrow.

When her climb came to a breathless stop, she was on a shelf of rock, dry and clean as a dancing floor, which went trimly along at the level of tree tops. She followed it rapidly and so, a quarter of an hour later, came face to face with the red signal post. At sight of it she stopped and her heart jumped. It still pointed rigidly down the narrow cañon and its base was still washed by the more venturesome half of the mountain stream, but under the splendid, blue sky it had an entirely friendly and

beckoning air. The whole tumbled cleft presented a fairylike invitation; it was odd rather than sinister, its end promised elfin pleasures; there was no doom in its unclouded, ultimate sky. Rosamund smiled at her superstition of yesterday and, having smiled, she addressed herself vigorously to exploration with a light, safe heart.

It required, however, the ingenuity of a savage as well as the brave heart of an explorer to penetrate the cañon, which bristled at first with every obstruction known to the woods: down timber, knee-high, waist-high, breast-high, thickets of buck brush, sudden swamps overgrown with willow, and always the interpenetrating ridges which meant everlasting ascent and descent and often a perilous circumvention along a rock wall or across a shattered shoulder.

She worked silently with supple patience and, looking back from the top of the third, half-intersecting ridge, she was delighted by a neat view of the camp: a circle of smooth green, tents, ponies, a thread of smoke. She even thought that she could distinguish Lilith's orange-colored sweater. Lunch was probably being served. She took out her own, a sandwich and a bundle of dried raisins, and ate, enjoying the feeling of human companionship which her view of the camp gave her.

She had come far already and, judging by the sun, it was not later than two o'clock. If she were quick, she might get to some point where the mystery of the cañon end would be revealed to her. Down there along the stream it might be easier traveling. She returned a few raisins to her pocket, smiled down at the sleepy, unsuspecting camp, and began her third abrupt descent.

Beside the green and white stream, which was deepening and running fast, there went a game trail into which Rosamund struck joyously. For the most part the trail kept her along the middle of the cañon side, but sometimes it

climbed up to the sky and sometimes plunged again to the stream.

For hours she followed it without a conscious thought in her head except the thought of following, and then the trail brought her to a formidable stop. At this point the game had evidently crossed the stream. In fact, there was nothing else for them to do. The bank on her side had turned into a steep wall, the whole cañon had folded suddenly into a dark and threatening impasse. She saw that her companionable sunlight had crept away, climbing stealthily up to the top of the hills. The red guardian of the pass was out of sight. A hollow sound of falling water came from somewhere in the secrecy ahead. The water below her looked deep and very swift.

She decided that it was time to turn back and discovered, with the decision, that she was very tired. Her body ached and she felt an exhaustion of nervous energy. It would be a long, hard walk over the ground she had traveled with such unvarying effort, and after all—here her intention twisted—she had seen nothing to reward her infinite ingenuities and risks, while, just around the bend of the cliff, where the walls narrowed, she might find depths and stretches of sunny, forest land, a lake, perhaps, bluer than that azure word, certainly a waterfall and some dizzy surprise of precipice or hollow. She reversed her decision, edged along the base of the cliff, and so discovered a log which lay straight across the stream.

Then the memory of the dog-faced rock and that strange doom of stained and tumbled clouds assailed her and she stopped with a great drop of courage. She would go back at top speed to camp. She did go as far as the game trail and then the hollow reverberation of a waterfall close ahead, appealed to her pride. She would be a very child, if she didn't take twenty minutes more, and make one more effort of pluck, to get a view. That

would be something to tell George. He loved such discoveries of beauty. She would name the place Red Dog Cañon, and the falls—well, if they looked the name, she would call them "Hidden Waters," or "Lost" or "Fatal," something to express that intimate shudder of her spirit.

She went quickly to the log and, keeping her eyes away from the swift water, began a nice and careful crossing. Her powers of balance had always been extraordinary and she had great physical self-confidence. The log, besides, was big and steady. Her boots, however, she found slippery from the mud of the last swamp and the fear they gave her of a loss of footing made her heart plunge once or twice and her lips turn cold.

In the middle of the log she caught sight of the cañon's secret and, with a cry half of delight and half of fear, she moved her body slightly, lost her poise and dropped into an icy current that whirled her like a log and bore her away with it and plunged with her down between the gateway of two straight, high cliffs and drove her with the blow of a piston deep down into a green pool that lay at the base of the great precipice and received the rushing body of the falls.

CHAPTER VI.

A man was looking down into the pool. He lay prone on his stomach across the flat top of a rock and his chin was protected from the sharp edge by the thickness of a long, gray, matted beard which was pulled in and caught under his naked, hairy chest. His arms, also naked and hairy, hung down into the water; the big fingers of his hands, which appeared green and misshapen through the clear medium, were slightly bent upward. On the face of this man there was an expression of animal craft and greed.

The body of a big fish down in the

shadows moved across his palms; his fingers delicately curled under it. The trout lay torpid, all the swiftness of green-brown fins and tail forgotten in this sensation, delightful, unexpected, not, in his experience, to be explained. He let his weight, six slippery pounds of pink flesh, lean into the cradling palms. The crooked fingers ran up under his gills and with a jerking, upward motion whirled him through the air, landed him gasping and flapping in the grass and, pouncing upon him, knocked out his life.

The fisherman then returned to his former attitude and his expression subsided from triumph to cunning patience. It was the face of hardy middle age; the deep-set eyes, small and bright, were wrinkled like a monkey's, the eyebrows were abnormally dense and long-haired so that the breeze blew wisps from them down across the lids and temples. The hair of the head was like a tangled bush. It had been rudely hacked across the forehead and back of the ears.

He wore an awkward pair of breeches, his legs below the knee were wrapped in strips of rawhide, and his feet shod in awkward moccasins. Above the waist his body was bare. It was burned red and brown, black across the shoulders, and its chest and forearms were overgrown with a reddish, curly thatch. He had none of the beauty, although he had all of the savagery, of that valley at the end of which the narrow falls faltered like a pillar of smoke.

On three sides the circular, red rock walls stood up, fringed at the top with dark pines; at their base grew the aspens, slender, white-trunked, round-leaved, always in delicate, dancing motion, great bushes of mountain ash, and then the grass, waist-high, with a star-ring of flowers; red, blue, white, gold, purple flowers of a hundred different kinds treading from the rocks to the edge of the river. This ran, with an outcry, straight across the open space

and disappeared strangely where a landslide had fallen across the only other opening into the valley. Except for the hardly shouting of the river and the falls, the bowl of the valley held an incredible silence. What animal life moved here must be small and silent. The sunlight slept impartially across the greenness and the pool and the man's red face and up against the tall, red rocks above him.

A shrill, human cry made a target of this silence and the man gathered himself together in a convulsion of startled nerves and crouched beside his rock. An instant later a loglike body flashed down the falls and plunged straight and deep into the central water. The man lifted his head and peered. He saw a white wafer, like a reflection of the full moon slowly glimmering through the green outer liquid of the pool. It floated up gradually, more and more moonlike and wan. Crystal bubbles rose from it and broke on the surface. Just before it emerged the man, with a throaty grunt, gripped a branch in one hand, let himself into the water and, with his free hand, caught at a dark, floating substance and, stepping backward, pulled out the unconscious woman by the hair.

She lay at his feet, modeled in her wet clothes from her throat to her feet, her hair, clinging tight about the ears and temples, spread out under her head like a fan. Her hands trailed flat in the grass, the five fingers pointing through the slender green stems. The man turned her over and let the water run from her mouth and nostrils, then, rolling her back, he began to move her arms rhythmically above her head, out, and down again against her ribs. She came to life slowly, unwillingly, and with evident agony.

When her breath caught and held and became regular, the man let her arms fall and stooped down to her face, watching like a curious child for the opening of her large, white, trembling lids. The lashes were caught in ink

2—Ains.

points. They lifted, fluttered, showing the whites, then closed and opened very wide. Inside the man saw the familiar colors of his pool, not green, not gray, not brown, not gold, but a mingling of them all. They were as expressionless as that water. Humanity came back to them with a look of strong distaste. The woman lifted her hand to push him away.

"Go back," she said, deeply and distinctly, "I did not call you—*beast!*"

"You better speak to me nicer than that," grumbled the man, grinning under his hair. "If it hadn't been for this beast, you'd be a dead one, drowned dead, and smothered in all that wet hair. Here"—he looked cautiously over his thick, naked shoulder—"I'll take and carry you over to my house and lay you under rugs. You're took with shud-derin'; that water's cold."

He lifted her as if she were a rag doll, throwing her bodily across his shoulder, and ran with her in a silent, hasty fashion across the stream and the open grass to the shelter of the aspens. Here, more slowly, he followed a slender path until, between two tree trunks, a door opened and let him into a low, log hut, roofed with logs and mud and branches. It had no window, but there was a fireplace of big, mud-plastered rocks and a bed of balsam, piled with hides. The floor was of trampled earth. The place smelled of earth, of sour food, and of human occupation.

The woman was dropped on the bed and, closing the ill-hung door, the man attempted in the dimness to open her wet flannel shirt. She resisted numbly, but with all the strength she had, her teeth gritting and her blue lips protesting:

"Don't. Don't. Let me alone, please."

The man desisted and squatted beside her, staring. She looked at him for as long as she could bear it, then shut her eyes, and turned away her face.

"You'll get used to me," grunted the

man, "like *Beauty* got used to the *Beast*. I'll light you a fire and let you dry yourself out, since you're one of the dainty kind!"

He threw some dry branches on the hearth and made sparks by grinding a pointed stone into a larger, hollowed one. The dry, brown pine needles caught after a while and he carefully piled sticks and logs until the dark, low interior danced with light and fiery little sparks ran whirling up the throat of the chimney. A wave of heat struck against the woman on the bed.

Her host went out, closed the crazy door after him as tightly as possible, and squatted against it. Presently he heard the woman move, and peered in. He watched her waver slowly over to the fire and sit before it, shivering and holding out her hands. Doubtfully she began to spread her hair to the heat. He waited and watched, then said roughly:

"Better strip and get your blood moving, girl. You ain't agoin' to get dry that a way."

The woman rose to her feet in a spring of surprising strength and grace. Under that roof she looked as tall as a tree. Her hair glittered about her and the blood rose, scarlet and throbbing, to her face.

"You must help me up that cliff at once before it gets dark," she said clearly, fixing her arrogant eyes on the man, "and help me back to camp. My guides will be out looking for me."

She moved a step toward him. His blood, too, had risen above the long-haired eyebrows.

"Yer guides will be out lookin' for you," he repeated, and stood staring; his hands hung at his sides and twitched. He was pondering with slow, pendulum motions of his mind. "They ain't agoin' to find you here," he announced. "This is the valley of a lost man, a man that means to stay lost. It's your bad luck dropped you down here. But you'll get used to it—like I did."

"What do you mean? Let me go out. If you won't help me, I can climb up by myself."

He stood before her, broad as a block of hewn stone.

"Easy there, girl. You can't climb out. And I can't help you. That is, I ain't agoin' to. If you drops into a man's secret, you're in honor bound to share that secret."

"If you help me out," she answered rapidly, in a less imperious, but no less vital tone, "I swear before God I will keep your secret to the end of my life."

He shook his head slowly.

"I wouldn't risk it. I can't afford to."

"It's a better risk than to let them come down here to find me. They will scour the country before they give me up."

This brought upon him another long fit of brooding and difficult thought. At the end of it he smiled broadly, showing broken, gaping teeth through the wild beard of his lips.

"I'd hev to risk my life to climb up there alone," he said. "Onct I did get up partway and fell, broke my leg; it's been crooked ever since. No doctor to set the bone. With you on my hands I couldn't begin to make it. You're in a bottled cañon, girl. The end where I come in has been sealed by God Almighty. Likely He was bent on punishin' me. Anyways, I ain't agoin' to defy His will. He seen fit to deliver me from man's prison and to fashion one of His own for me, and hallowed be His name."

It might have been mockery, it might have been strong, superstitious feeling, but whatever it was, the voice in which he spoke it reverberated under the earthy roof to which he lifted a pointing hand.

"And if it was by His will I'm shut in here, likely it was by His will you was sent to me." He swallowed with an audible, gulping noise. "It's been—lonesome, for lost men. Onct—" He

looked aside, smiled unwillingly, and went out.

This time he walked rapidly along the path and stepped into a thicket. In an instant she came running down from his door, white as foam, her lips tight, her eyes ablaze, and he let her run past him, following her softly. She splashed through the stream, went beyond the pool, and made a desperate effort to climb up the cliff, tearing her hands and her knees. At last, as he watched, creeping closer, she slipped and fell and rolled along the grass almost to his feet. At sight of him she was up instantly and ran to climb again. This time she called:

"Jim! Jim! Jimmie! Oh, Lilith, help!"

At that ringing, desperate clamor, he ground his teeth at her and plucked her from the rocks as if she had been a limpet, fastening his big arms about her futile writhing, and doubling an elbow across her mouth so that her lips bled against her teeth.

"Shut your face!" he said. "Beauty, you'll get used to me in time. I ain't goin' to hurt you any. Pretty! Pretty! Wildcat! No bitin'!" He had to drop her for an instant and take a fresh grip. She fought him across the purple dimness of the open place and along the darkening trail, and fought him like fire at the low threshold of his hut. But there, by pushing her cruelly against the wall, he finally mastered her and carried her in, throwing her down on his bed and holding her there, his hands branding her straining shoulders, his leg thrown heavily across her knees, pinning them to stillness as though they had been crushed under a bar of iron.

CHAPTER VII.

No pain, no fear, no disgust, Rosamund told herself scornfully, would master her will. If she could not kill this beast, she had still her brain, her

tongue, her spirit. She relaxed suddenly in his grasp, lay breathing deeply, regularly, her eyes on his face. And she told herself to be calm, not to be afraid.

"Let go of me," she said presently, in a voice that was breathless and weak, but steady; it had even a trace of its ironic common sense. "I won't fight you any more, or run away, or call."

He let go of her, but stayed crouched beside her. He, too, was breathing fast and she could feel his breath on her face.

"Now listen to me, please, lost man. You will be lost as you never were before, if you hurt me. You know that. You must get that into your head."

He nodded.

"When your guides come, you mean?"

"Yes. When they come with their guns and ropes."

"If they come, do you know where they'll find you?"

Her lips shaped "Where?" though her eyes still managed to scorn her sudden whiteness.

"They'll find you floating about aimlesslike in that pool beneath the falls. And they'll say, 'Poor woman! Here goes her tracks along this here cañon and here she steps out acrost that there log and here she's slipped and there's where she went over the falls and here, sure enough, she's drowned! No woman,' they'll say, 'could of lived after a drop like that with a ton of water to pound her under 's fast as she floats up.' And say, girl, I kin hear the feet of them guides trailin' you two mile away up that there cañon, if I keep my mind on hearkenin' for 'em. It won't take me long, onct I hear 'em, to kerry you to the water and hold you under and tiptoe back to my hut. And onct they seen you, 'likely they'll content theirselves with lookin' down at you over the cliff. They won't be in the humor to explore."

"A minute ago, lost man," she said faintly, "you were talking about God! And now you are planning to do a mur-

der. I would come up out of the pool and haunt you, lost man."

He paled and scowled at her.

"There ain't no truth in that, lady. Onct a woman's kilt she stays kilt. And you can take that from me for a fact. But don't you be scared. I ain't goin' to treat you bad. God sent you to me, didn't He? That's so. You put that just right. Blessed be His name. See, now, you lie there easy and sleep. I'll cook you a mess of fish and give you some goat's milk. And to-night," he said magnanimously, "you ken hev my bed. Why, there's time before winter comes—" He stopped and got swiftly to his feet. "Hist -ow," he said, "there's Brand." His face changed to one of extreme stealth and fear. "Look, lady, if you're scared of me, wait till you lay eyes on him. Better stay quiet, while I go out and send him back where he belongs. He smelt my fish, the cat!"

Rosamund followed him with her eyes to the door and, as he went out, with an exaggerated carefulness, she gave way to shuddering, to waves of spiritual nausea. Another man, worse than this one! Her body would be given to the dogs. She turned her face, burying it among the hides, choking down great, rending sobs. Her fear was like a wolf, biting at her heart, at her throat, pressing its weight on her chest.

It was through that heavy terror that she first heard Brand's voice, a slow, full-throated, gentle voice, patient and sad.

"Kin I hev my supper with you, Mathew?" it asked wistfully. "I've got a picture here for you to look at."

"Get away from my door with your picture, you crazy wolf!" muttered Mathew, and shuffled down the trail. He was evidently trying to get rid of his visitor.

Rosamund flung herself across the hut, and tore open the door. Out there in the green dimness under moving leaves she called blindly:

"Brand! Brand! Brand!"

Her voice, with its husky throb of fear, rang across the dusk.

The taller of the two big, shadowy shapes gave a visible start, recoiled, and, pushing aside the other, came up to her along the trail. When he was close Rosamund looked into another bearded face, bronze-bearded, bronze-eyed, with a wide, square brow and a mouth visible beneath the jaggedly cut mustache, a tight mouth, sad and young.

"Please take me away from that beast," she said, and went up to him and lifted his heavy right arm in both her hands and put it about her body. All her movements now were quite instinctive. She had no thoughts. "I can trust you," she said.

His arm tightened involuntarily.

Mathew had come running and now, his hands hovering over the dim woman's shape as if they wished, but didn't dare, to pluck her away, he said over and over, in varying tones of protest:

"She's mine, she's mine!"

Rosamund shrank away from those hands closer to the still body of the younger man.

"I pulled her out of the pool, I tell you," Mathew chattered, "and saved her life. There's gratitude for you. The tigress! She'd of bit me. You better drop her afore she gets her claws into you. She's mine by our old right of first find, Brand."

Brand spoke slowly, with a humor that stimulated Rosamund's exhausted nerves like wine.

"Looks somethin' like she's chosen me," he said, and with that he thrust something into his shirt, turned with a long ripple of his great strength, and gathered her up impersonally in his arms. The other man ran back from the path like a frightened rabbit and Brand, turning, walked lightly along it. The leaves brushed Rosamund's shoulder; she could see the branches and the stars.

She was too weak for fear and the tears ran down her cheeks against the untanned leather of his sleeve.

During that passage from the cabin of Mathew to the cabin of Brand she was not Rosamund Kerr, the affianced of George Ferguson; she was a woman snatched from the original woman's fear and, because the masculine strength that wrapped tenderness and safety about her exhausted body had saved that body, she loved it, she worshiped it, it became her god. And with a queer, serene happiness she surrendered herself to it, as the victim of a nightmare surrenders himself again to the composure of normal sleep.

This hazy tranquillity lasted until she was set down before warmth and light, and, by an enormous effort, opened her eyes, brushed away her tears, and saw Brand's hearth fire at her feet. From the flames her look traveled up to his face. As her eyes met his he shifted his feet and turned away, embarrassed and disturbed. So they remained for long minutes, silent and passive, the fire snapping its dry fingers at them, the silence of the darkening valley flowing about them like water.

In that long, half-conscious look of hers, Rosamund's observation, undisturbed by thought as is a child's, etched a picture of Brand upon her memory that for nicety, completeness, and vividness took precedence of any other picture her experience had painted there. He was clean, he had a magnificent body, a well-set head, and smooth, ruddy skin. His hands were very large and rough, but not ill-shaped. He was broad of build and heavy, very strong, and his patient eyes and wide brow gave him a pathetic resemblance to a beast of burden, a yoked and gentle ox, unconscious of its terrible, dependent strength.

It was with this comparison that Rosamund's full consciousness returned, and with a sharp thrill of realization she straightened and looked about her. This

hut, like the other, was low, but not so brutally low as Mathew's; it had an open window and a wider door, it was larger and its four walls were of peeled logs, beautifully matched and fitted, and plastered with red clay. There was a higher fireplace, a cleaner hearth; the earthen floor had been covered by a curiously woven, sweet-scented carpet of dried grasses, a work of unbelievable patience and skill. A bed frame, laced with rawhide and piled with furry hides, occupied one corner, and there was, besides this, a very low, deep armchair in which she lay, made of skins stretched and tied on the frames which, she noticed in her sudden, intense realization of every detail, were held together by tightly fitted joints. Evidently the carpenter had no nails. A row of queer, clay vessels stood near the fireplace, in which some flat stones were shaped to the uses of an oven. Most curious of all, above the fireplace hung a skin on which had been painted an elaborate design in vivid reds and blues.

All this the firelight showed her before it led her back to the man still standing, awkward and silent, looking away from her at the flames. More and more as she looked at him did her courage return—her courage and her self-confidence. She thought of the Botticelli picture of Minerva and the Centaur; he was not unlike that Centaur in his look of haunted, half-unwilling docility.

The translation of this courage and self-confidence into speech or action, however, required an effort of which, for another long five minutes, she seemed incapable. And when at last she spoke, she had the sensation of speaking to him from a long distance; she groped for words, conscious of the immense importance of pleasing him, of winning him.

"Brand," she said softly, "I must thank you. I was in dreadful danger and fear with that monster."

To her surprise he smiled broadly, his even teeth flashing like a strong young dog's, and his eyes laughing like a pleased child's.

"He ain't rightly a monster—Mathew! But he's queer."

Rosamund groped again.

"I know him better than you do, Brand. He is a monster. I want you to take my word for that." She felt her heart plunging into faintness. "I wonder if you could give me something hot to drink?"

He moved over to the row of vessels and set one near the fire. After a moment he took it up, first wrapping his hand in a bit of soff hide, and poured out of it into a squat, clay saucer a good supply of steaming milk. She drank this down, though it had a strange taste.

"Goat's milk," he explained. "We corralled a pair of 'em over yonder and hev tamed them nice. We hev a little herd. We milk them twice a day and that's a good drink."

"How long have you been here, Brand?" she asked, leaning back again and wondering ruefully at the complete collapse of her strength.

He looked at her sideways and did not answer, and his flush and faint, childish frown warned her not to repeat her question.

"When," she asked, and her fingers turned cold against her palms where she pressed them, "when will you help me to climb back?"

"How did you get in?" he counter-questioned suddenly, his eyes turned to the fire where he was evidently making preparations to cook something in another, larger pot.

"I left my camp and explored this cañon, following a game trail along the stream until I couldn't get any farther without crossing water. I heard the falls"—she found herself speaking very simply and clearly, as to a child—"and wanted to see them, to see the end of the

cañon. So, very rashly, I tried to cross on a big fallen tree. In the middle I looked down and saw your wonderful, round valley with its great, red cliffs, and the sight must have made me start. I fell into the river and was torn away—I never felt such terrible force in any water, never—and thrown over the falls, which drove me, I should think, to the very bottom of that pool. I was unconscious, though, before I reached the bottom. I was unconscious when Mathew pulled me out." She leaned forward and threw the whole force of her will, as if it had been a spear, straight at him. "I must get back," she said. "I must and will get back."

Again he surprised her with his smile. "Well," he drawled, "nobody wants to keep you here, I guess," and with that speech changed the whole situation for her. She half rose, forgetting both fear and courage.

"Then you'll help me out now—at once? There's a moon coming up; it won't be dark."

He turned from his squatting posture and looked up at her, his lips apart in an astonished simplicity.

"Why, nobody can't get you out, don't you know that? It's a death business to climb out o' here anywheres. Only the wild goats can get down and up from this valley since the landslide. And those that do get themselves down over the slide, pretty generally stays here. I've kilt elk and deer and bear by shootin' arrows up at 'em and some of 'em's been obligin' enough to tumble over so's I got their meat and hides, but—this is a sealed valley, lady."

"Jim'll come with ropes to-morrow, perhaps," she said unthinkingly, and then shrank down, startled and dismayed. For Brand had got to his feet, one hand brandishing the green wand with which he had been stirring the contents of the pot, the other bent against the wall, and he had drawn back his lips from his teeth and was looking

from side to side with eyes of anger and fear.

"Get away from here!" he cried passionately. "Get away before they come and find me!"

She crept away from him toward the door, never taking her eyes from his face, for she had the feeling that, unless she kept her look fastened upon his, he would spring, and so ran down among the trees, keeping herself hidden, and crouching at last behind a dense bush of juniper beneath the cliff. It was cold out there in the blue moonlight, cold and desolate. The whisperings of the river were disconsolate and terrifying.

She heard Mathew's shuffling step somewhere over beyond the water, she heard the low, incessant thunder of the falls, she heard the cropping of the goats. Owls hooted sobbingly. Had it not been for her fear of Mathew, she would have crept down to the falls and perhaps have attempted again to climb or to call. At least, she would have stayed near the pool on the chance that Jimmie had tracked her there already. Her heart throbbed with miserable violence and irregularity, taking her breath. What, unless rescue came promptly, had she to hope for, if not some sort of horrible death? If Mathew found her, there would be degradation before death; if she crawled back, starved and shivering, to Brand, he would fling her out, if he did not kill her with one heavy-handed blow.

She sat like a savage woman, her knees gathered in her arms and her head bent; it seemed the position most favorable to warmth and safety and thought, though her disconnected repetitions of the cause for hope and fear had little resemblance to thought. She wondered what George was doing and almost smiled at a vision of his unconscious ease; perhaps he was writing one of those witty letters of his to her, seated at his inlaid desk under the lamp out in the country place in that large, beauti-

ful room from which the storm had once called her. The beast—she had called back the beast. George had said something of the sort, hadn't he?

Had there been some secret message across half the world to the beast of this lonely cañon, some quiver of communication mysteriously started by that yielding to wildness, which had drawn and drawn her until, at the sight of the red rock, she had felt its tug irresistibly and followed? Her sense, confused by this weird, unreasonable problem, swam into what was nearly sleep.

So, shivering in her damp clothes and starting half awake at intervals to the sounds of the night, she slept fitfully until the cold ate into her flesh. Then she rose, moved back slowly step by step toward Brand's cabin, no longer thinking, merely craving physical comfort, shelter, warmth, and food. The sparks of his fire whirled high above the trees, his window was a rosy square. She could smell the odor of cooked food. So she came trembling to his door and leaned against it and spoke softly, with a sob.

"Brand! Brand! Let me in. I'm cold. I'm hungry. I'm so tired."

No answer, though she heard his suspended movements and knew that he was listening. She was again afraid of him, but more afraid of Mathew and of the icy, lonely, mountain night.

"Be sensible," she reasoned softly, half laughing, half crying with a sense of her predicament and her humility. "Jim won't come to-night and, if he does come and finds me, he won't dream of hurting you. He will be grateful to you for taking such good care of me. You are very kind. I trusted you. Don't let a perfectly unreasonable fear make you cruel. If I go wandering about, Mathew will find me—" She broke down into a pitiful, childish weeping and laid her body down on the ground and her desperate, golden head upon his threshold.

He must have heard her crying, but he gave no sign for long minutes. Then he came heavily to his door and opened it.

"Very well, then, come in—you fool!" he bade her roughly, and, without so much as looking at her, strode back to his meal on the hearth.

Rosamund followed him and crouched opposite him, trying with a last effort of her self-respect to keep her eyes from his food. But presently he pushed over to her what was left in the bowl and even filled it with some of the hot supply on the fire. She ate it thankfully to the last morsel, a sort of chowder, it was, bits of fish and meat and herbs, thick, tasteless, but certainly very nourishing. He did not watch her, but went to his chair, where he began to work at something which required close and minute attention, so that his head was bent almost to his knees.

Rosamund looked at him vaguely now and then from her chowder, for the eating of which he had lent her his wooden spoon, and wondered at his absorption, at the absent serenity of his expression, at his softly whistling lips and big, carefully moving fingers. He was weaving, she fancied remotely—for bodily comfort had temporarily smothered her realizations—with some sort of a wooden frame.

When the last mouthful was gone Rosamund became the hunted prey and at last the submissive captive of sleep. She rose, walked blindly across the room and, without so much as a by your leave, lifted the topmost hide, threw herself down on the others, and, drawing the soft fur up to her neck, gave a great sigh, and fell instantly into unconsciousness.

She woke at dawn. The cabin was full of pure, pale light and air that smelled of wet leaves. Window and door stood open. The fire had burned itself out, but at the hearth, almost in the ashes, Brand sat, his well-shaped,

chestnut head on his knees, his arms hanging, his hands relaxed, palms upward along the floor, their big fingers curled like a child's. Rosamund felt a great thrill of fear which was followed by the relaxation of as great a relief. He had left her in his bed and had slept on the floor like a dog. There was a pathos in that big, sleeping figure that drew the cords of her throat tight and stung her eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

During the days of waiting, of expectation, of suspense, Rosamund followed Brand about like a dog. She dared not let him out of her sight. She struggled after him when he hunted and trapped and when he fished she kept in his shadow; she crouched at his feet when he worked. He treated her as he might have treated a cowardly dog, giving her food, it is true, and shelter, robbing her sleeping place only of a single hide, but showing her, at the best, annoyance, amusement, or contempt; at the worst, his fear of Jim's arrival. Sometimes she dared to repeat her reassurances: "If he comes, he'll be very grateful to you, Brand. I promise you he will do nothing to betray or to disturb you." He seemed to accept these promises unwillingly.

She watched him at all his work with a certain admiration, for he was exceedingly deft and ingenious. With his one tool, an ax, which he worshiped almost like a deity, he could make anything, she thought. His weapons, bow and arrows and club, were better than an Indian's. His traps were marvels of invisible efficiency. He snared his fish. His knives of thin stone slit a hide as if it were paper. He had a wood-fiber thread and a great, bone needle with which he sewed together his strong, soft, leather clothes. His food was extraordinarily varied and palatable.

On the third evening Mathew came

to their cabin, grunted, and walked in at the open door. Brand was in his chair and Rosamund was washing her face and hands in warm water, kneeling before a clay bowl on the hearth. She shrank back and drew close to Brand, who lifted a big hand from his work and laid it on her neck where she knelt beside his knee.

"Hello," said Brand, and smiled lazily.

"How you comin', you two?" asked Mathew, showing his gaping, discolored teeth in a bearded leer.

Neither Brand nor Rosamund answered, but she was surprised to see his face flame as he drew his hand quickly from her neck.

"You better listen to me, feller," Mathew began, with a great assumption of reasonable friendliness. "I've been athinkin' this business over and the more I thinks, the less I likes it. When her guides come and find her, it's all up with us, ain't it, Brand? How else can you figure it out?" He came up to the fire and squatted so that he faced the lazy giant and the crouching woman. "Say they comes over the cliff with their ropes and comes nosin' and callin' till she runs to 'em. Why, they'll go back with a story of two wild men, won't they? Back to Timber City down yonder, and 'twon't take the authorities long to figure out who them two wild men are. Then they'll be back with their guns and ropes and handcuffs. Where we got to run to? Eh? Trapped, ain't we? We'll be drug up the face of them cliffs and toted down along to the pen, and the end of us'll be—you kin remember what. No get-away a second time for Timmy Mathews and Bully Brand, feller. And all account of a pale-faced, yellor-haired doll baby in trousers, with a neck like a tame, white goose."

Brand looked down at her, noting the yellow hair, no doubt, and the white throat.

"She's a nuisance," he agreed, with

that queer, occasional humor of his, "an' I don't rightly know what to do with her, but she won't leave me alone and I can't very well keep on kickin' her out. Where's there for the poor critter to go to, anyway? She can't take care of herself like we can."

During the days of his contemptuous and surly silence he had never made so long a speech to Rosamund as this one, and the sound of his voice brought back something of her first impression of him, as a gentle, wistful being, patient, worthy of trust.

The grotesque, gray-bearded animal on the floor, however, shifted closer and put a dirty, broken-nailed hand on Brand's left arm; Rosamund clung to his right with hands that bit into his muscles.

"You give her to me, Brand, see? Let me take keer of her, tame her! I'll keep her clost and when they come I'll fix it so they won't go nosin' round over our valley. You wouldn't let harm come to me on her account—would you?—after me helpin' you get off and our years in here together, you and me agin' the wilderness. She ain't pretty. She's all gaunted up and dressed like a man, no shape to her, and pale—ugh! I know more about womenfolks than you do, Brand. She's a tough one. Let me have the tamin' of her, and when I get through with her, if you want her then—"

Rosamund bent her head away from the phrases that followed. She dared not let go her desperate hold of Brand, even to put her hands against her ears, but she shrank down out of his sight and rocked her head against the chair close to the floor. Brand tore his arm from her fingers, as if they had been threads. He stood up and Mathew, too, rose, grinning doubtfully. Rosamund screamed aloud.

"Get out, you dirty animal," said Brand, "and leave the woman alone or I'll kill you!"

Mathew went, as she had gone once before Brand's anger, his eyes fastened fearfully on the other's face until the door had crashed behind him. They heard him running off under the trees, heavy-footed, like a swiftly lumbering bear. Rosamund climbed to her knees and caught Brand's big hand and rubbed her cheek against it.

"Thank you—thank you—thank you!" she whispered brokenly.

"Stop that," he said. "Set down."

She obeyed tremblingly and he went back to his interrupted work.

For an hour they sat there, while Rosamund's heart wailed on and on in her breast: "Jim, Jim! Lilith! Oh, God, let them come soon!"

A square of white hide stretched on a frame was suddenly thrust into her lap.

"Why don't you look at my pictures?" Brand asked gruffly.

She looked up at him with a quivering smile, then brushed aside her tears and took the thing in her shaking hands. She saw that it was of herself—this picture, picked out in queer colors: of a woman, yellow-haired, long-necked, bending over a bowl. It had a grace of line, a precision, a sense of proportion altogether astonishing.

"Why, Brand," she said, "it's good. It's wonderfully good. I know about such things." Her voice was genuinely enthusiastic and surprised.

He was so silent over her praise that she looked up doubtfully and was amazed at his glowing face, his shining eyes, his abashed, unwilling, almost quivering smile. Her praise had touched him; then, profoundly. He must have been very lonely in his work. She had an aching, tormented memory of George, lithe and tall and slim in his painter's smock, charging to and fro before a canvas under the great studio skylight, looking to her now and then for approval, with his confident smile.

"Brand," she said impulsively, restored for the moment almost to her ac-

customed self by this memory and by his crude, instinctive artistry, "isn't it possible for you to leave this place and to come back to civilization with me and to begin again? I'll help you."

The quick, sensitive, happy light in his face went out blackly. He looked away from her.

"No," he said. "No! I killed a man. They'd hang me. I was to of been hanged." He had told her his secret and it fell like a weight into her consciousness.

"Why did you kill?" she asked, her heart beating heavily with controlled horror and unwilling sympathy.

For the first time he looked at her straight and level, with eyes as doomed as that turbulent sky that had so disturbed her spirit.

"Because I was jealous of a woman," he said gruffly. "Because I was a big kid fool. She tricked me. So did he. I struck him so's he died of it. I'd strike him over again, I guess. Better for the likes of me to stop here. Mathew says God made the cañon a prison for us. Maybe He did. Does God bother with such bloody animals as him and me, I wonder? Tigers and wolves?"

His lips drew the words out loathingly and he fell to staring into the fire, brooding and very sad. He must, she thought, long ago have shed all of his tears. He was still very young—younger, perhaps, than she was. What had the woman done to him? Where was she now? Had she any remorse, and pity for his lost life? An animal crime, of passion and jealousy, and now this animal life, loveless, with none of the joys, only the hardships and the fears. If it was God's sentence, it was a hard one; hard and just, with a great, impersonal justice at once more merciful and more cruel than man's.

And she began to wonder at her own calmness, sitting there at the feet of a confessed murderer, looking up into his eyes. Life had become a nightmare,

past analysis, comprehension, understanding.

CHAPTER IX.

Sitting there at Brand's feet, like a savage woman, Rosamund's head fell toward her knees and she slept and dreamed of George. She woke with her heart clapping from some dream fear. The fire had burned almost out through lack of tending and Brand had left the cabin. The ugly memory of that afternoon's experience, of Mathew and his cunning eloquence, shot through her and she got up, hastily crossed the room, and opened the door.

The night stood at the threshold, very still; the stars hung above the red cliffs, which did not quite lose their color even by this light; all the leaves in the valley sighed together; the falls slipped down with a wet, audible weight over the rocks; the river made a husky, rapid shouting that had a mysterious structure of sound: pauses, phrases, rhythms as of human speech. Rosamund received a new awareness as of the physical presence of night. It had silver hands and feet, a dark, perilous face; she knew it with an awful, personal intimacy from which hitherto civilization had protected her. Was civilization perhaps only man's escape from such incomprehensible intimacies, when he had walked in the garden with his outdoor god?

She pulled her imagination back and went a few doubtful steps along the path. There at her feet lay Brand. She had almost stepped upon him. He was wrapped in the single hide of which he had robbed her, his face was turned up to the sky, and he was profoundly sleeping. Reassured, puzzled, she went quietly back and closed the door. Why for the first time this night had he respected her privacy? For some reason she associated this action with his deep, surprised flush at Mathew's question "How you comin' on, you two?" when he had hurriedly withdrawn his big hand

from her neck. How mysterious the savage keeper of her safety could be in his animal simplicity! Nevertheless, her solitude was tragically welcome.

She pushed the big chair against the inside of the door and, kneeling by her bed, dared to weep. The long-controlled indulgence rested her nerves and after it she built up the fire, heated water, bathed, and washed her clothing. It was a sensation of exquisite luxury, a feeling almost of being at home between those clean, log walls. Her spirit lightened and she stretched herself out on the queer bed frame with the skins of beasts beneath and above her body, indescribably freshened and relaxed.

But, to her surprise, she could not sleep. Hers was the restlessness of the sheepfold when the watchdog is away. She lay and heard all the small sounds of the night; she thought of Mathew and imagined creeping steps. She remembered his hands on her arms, his leg pinning down her knees. Her pulses began their frightened dance. Twice she got up to look at Brand, lying across the path, still as a long log. At last, leaving the door ajar and straining her attention for the sound of his breathing, sleep surprised her.

The next day Brand said not a word about his change of sleeping quarters, but went about the somber day's business quite as usual. He treated her a thought less brutally; this, she decided, as a reward for her interest in his picture-making because, when she asked him timidly about the source of his color supply, he very graciously unbent from his sullen lordliness and even took her with him to the patch of flowers whose petals, crushed and squeezed, supplied him with a crude, cold blue. His red, she discovered, was from his own veins. Yellow was a dusty pollen, mixed with spittal. But this, he told her, wouldn't last.

She suggested a search for chalks and in his interest he became as communica-

tive as a child. He was a humble artist, this brute; her praise seemed to lift him up, literally to inspire, breathe into him an avidity to create beauty. He asked for help. That afternoon they deserted traps and he lay prone along the floor while she sat there beside him, giving him a lesson in perspective with an improvised compass.

For an hour Rosamund forgot Mathew and Jim, her danger and her desolation. It was as absorbing as a nursery game, one of those working games of childhood which hold surely the uttermost joy of creation, its promise of perfection, its happy absorption, its unattainable desire. When Brand rose, with one of his big, habitual sighs, she felt exhausted, but not a little proud. It was something to kindle such a light in his dogged, hopeless young face. Again she thought of Botticelli's Centaur.

That night he went out as before and lay down across the trail, and this time she had no difficulty in going instantly to sleep. She half woke once to a sound of a shrill, distant bleating and wondered vaguely if one of the goats were being frightened or hurt. She felt that she should tell Brand, but could not keep awake long enough to do so. Instead, she began at once to dream that she was a tethered goat and that a bear shamled about her in narrowing circles. Up above, on a cliff edge, George was guarding her. He was armed from head to heel like a medieval knight, but his protection seemed to her distant and undependable, the bear having the face of Mathew and leering horribly.

The nightmare would have awakened her at its climax, but she was not given time for the mercy of such an awakening. It was a smother of stuff over her head, the weight of a body, that tore her from dream terror to a more searching reality of fear. She struggled, tried to scream. She knew the strength and the cruel, heavy grasp of the beast and un-

derstood, as if she had seen it in pictures, that he had decoyed her guardian from the trail by making one of the goats set up that beseeching outcry, and so had slipped into the hut while she slept.

He rolled her about and wrapped her up in his arms; carried her like a log over his shoulder. She was gagged, tied, helpless. She recognized the end and pictured its brutal details until the smooth motions of his body, the brushing of the leaves, a vague vision of moving darkness went away from her senses into nausea and blackness and a sudden falling. She knew then that she had really been dropped, thrown down on the ground. She could hear beside her, above her, heavy, staggering steps, hard breathing, blows, struggling. She fought her bonds, turned from the earth and, straining back over her shoulder, made out two big shapes locked and fighting like gorillas against the stars. So she lay, every muscle tense.

It took place on the edge of the stream; she could see the moon-touched brightness of running water. Brand's head was distinct, rocking above the massed, close-writhing bulks; Mathew's big humped shoulders and low-hung head suggested vividly the bear of her dream. If he killed Brand! If he killed Brand! The lumpish mass rolled about, fell, crashed down, was lost from her sight, dropping below the starry background. She heard the rattle of stones, a splash, a groan, silence; in a moment, steps. She could see a dark, single shape loom up again, but found herself unable to distinguish whether it was Mathew or Brand. It had every shape, no shape at all, a mass of manhood, coming toward her.

A hand touched her and she thrilled from head to foot. That gentle, humble touch was Brand's. As he removed the gag, she pressed her bleeding lips to his hands and kissed them over and over, not knowing what she did.

He helped her to her feet and put his arm about her. They went back silently along the trail and he put her into his chair, but, before she could look up or speak, he turned and left her.

Rosamund sat waiting, resting her head in her shaking hands, and hardly dared to breathe or to thank God. At last, after a very long stillness, she heard Brand's steps coming very slowly and heavily up the trail. He paused before he came in and when he went past her to the hearth he kept his face averted.

"Brand," she said timidly.

At that word he flung up his hands so that they almost touched the low roof, and turned to her a white, contorted face.

"I've killed!" he shouted. She had never heard so terrible a cry. "I've killed him! He was the only other one. He helped me to make my get-away. He was my friend. We was alone here, him and I, when the land fell. That night he sat by me until the sun come, and held my hands. I've killed again. God! God! God!" This was a prayer, the first, Rosamund recognized awfully, that seemed to her ear to be spoken straight to Omnipotence.

After it the great, tormented creature struck his breast, went down on his knees, then on his face and fell to hitting his forehead on the hearth.

Compassion pulled her out of her chair and took her to her own knees beside him there and presently she drew his head to her lap. He cried like a heartbroken boy and her voice and her hands did their woman's best to comfort him.

CHAPTER X.

There is nothing so surprising to the mind of a civilized being, complacently convinced of its sophisticated softness, and nothing that is in reality so natural, as the readiness with which he adapts himself to primitive conditions. In a few days he travels back along the cen-

turies—the lack of luxury is barely felt; in a week, the lack of so-called necessities; in a fortnight, the lack of accustomed warmth and food and shelter. For Rosamund, this process was aided by a fundamental longing, that fiery longing to which she had confessed, "To live close to reality, to fight, to work, to love with her hands;" that surge of repressed emotions which demanded exercise, primal rage and fear, joy, hunger.

In a day with Brand Rosamund lived with an unknown completeness. Mathew's death, which shocked her not at all, had relieved her from her worst oppression. It was only a matter for patience before she would be tracked and found. In the meanwhile, what could she do but wait and try to keep her sanity and her control of Brand?

She realized that her poise was abnormally complete. She looked on, helplessly shocked by what was almost, at times, her enjoyment of the mad adventure. She would lie awake, after that first profound sleep, and stare at the fire-painted roof, wondering at herself, groping deep down in the mystery of her consciousness for an explanation. There was one, perhaps, but it turned a masked face to her inquiries. She trembled from exposing it; always, before she had the courage to see this face, she slept.

Brand, at once her peril and her guardian, naturally absorbed the greater part of her waking attention. From the moment when she had become the admiring audience and the inspiration of his picture-making his attitude toward her had softened; but from that hour when he had wept at her knees and received the comfort of her hands he had changed from her master to her slave. His throne before the hearth was hers. He sat there at her feet, brought her food. His eyes were the eyes of a dog. He labored for her smile. If she was sad, he fell into abysmal gloom and anger.

He was a child for coaxing back her gladness, a lover for his inexhaustible pursuit of her pleasure and relief. Having buried Mathew, he avoided the spot painfully, but, because some exquisite, deep-blue monkshood grew near the place, he braved his superstitious terror and remorse and, with sweat on his brow, gathered an armful and carried them to her, laying them beside her where she rested under the firs, after one of their fishing expeditions. She touched the flowers, smiled, and looked up lazily.

"Why did you go there?" she asked then, at sight of his bronzed, wide-browed face.

"Don't you like the flowers?" he counterquestioned.

"Yes, that's a heaven of blue, isn't it? But it hurt you to go there—near that place. Your lips are white."

He sat down beside her and, before she could divine his intention, he had laid one great, brown hand across her wrist, stealthily as he might have caught a small, trapped animal, had bent his head and fastened the pale lips against her palm, lying open against the pine-needled earth.

Her blood, angry and startled, leaped from her heart to the spot his lips had touched. She drew her hand swiftly away and sat up. He crouched back, frightened, breathing fast.

"You're angry with me. You hate me?" he asked, fiercely and timidly.

She bent her sparkling, arrogant look upon him. And under it he winced and started like a boy under a switch. At last, unable to bear her silent castigation, so beautifully administered, he growled out:

"Stop that!" Then he rolled himself away, lay for a moment with his face in his arms. At last he sprang to his feet and fled.

She laughed softly, but realized that she was shaking. It was a dangerous

creature, this big, silent beast with whom she played, whose head she had caressed, whose hand she had guided with her own. She thought of his massive, iron body, and a sort of faintness forced her to lie back on the ground and close her eyes. The air was warm and sweet, but it made her lips and fingers very cold. An irregular pounding shook her breast.

If his desire grew, if his passion became insistent, was there enough force in her superior delicacy to dominate him? If she struggled against his beast, could she master it? Or was there, deep, deep within her, beneath her consciousness, stronger than her very soul— She turned over, as Brand had turned to hide himself from her scornful and berating eyes, and pressed her forehead close against the earth. No, she did not dare to follow that inquiry to its answer; but it turned itself and followed her fleeing will. Could the beast in a woman weaken her conscious will, could the century-tamed thing that worshiped capture and coercion, that fled only to be pursued, and fought demoniacally only to be overwhelmed—could that woman beast betray a living, conscious soul, against its strongest efforts? What nightmare was she encouraging?

She sat up, stood, went out into the sun, and stared up at the high, red cliffs. She drove her teeth into her lip and trembled. She summoned George with all the passion of her heart. The red walls danced through her tears.

"You must come soon!" she said. She had spoken aloud and harshly, in a threatening voice. This frightened her. The lonely valley frightened her, the very sky. She ran back to the hut.

There she found Brand preparing dinner and, at her involuntary pause in the doorway at sight of him, he gave her a queer, pitiful, blinking look.

"You didn't want to see me here? You want me to get out?" he asked hopelessly and, setting down his clay pot,

he came toward her, his head bent and his big hands moving across his chest.

"Isn't it your house, Brand?" She tried to smile at him, but found tears on her face.

He had stopped in front of her and faltered there doubtfully, looking at her and looking away. She saw that he was fighting himself, that he was ashamed and timid and unhappy. At last, going past her, he stopped and spoke, without looking back over his shoulder. His voice was thick with tears.

"I won't touch you again," he promised, and added in a painful whisper: "Don't—you—cry." And he reached back his hand gropingly for comfort.

She could not help putting hers upon it and at the touch he instantly twisted around and fell on his knees, hiding his face against her.

"Don't you never cry!" he begged. "What makes you cry?"

She found herself soothing him, her fingers going over and over his curling, chestnut hair.

He was easy to read, a primer to her trained powers of analysis. After intercourse with George, artist, explorer, man of the world, a cultured, polished, laughing Sphinx, what was there in Brand to confuse observation? She knew that he desired her, she knew that his mind worshiped her and that his spirit feared her, and that, above everything in life, he dreaded her anger and her unhappiness. Any pain of hers was tenfold his, for this natural penalty of loving he had not acquired the subtlety to obviate, to soften, or to escape. The hard and willful lack of compunction of civilized men and women was a hundred years from him. Once she had bruised her arm and he had cursed and bit his lip; his eyes had glistened wet.

He knew that this white-skinned woman, with her eyes, which were both beauty and terror to him, and with her sad, enchanting smile, was a goddess, who would smite him, but never unbend

to his desire. He could not, for very fear and reverence, break down his idol; he could not torment her exquisite serenity, but his suffering threw him into contortions at her feet. And he was tempted by his strength.

From the instant of his kiss against her captured hand, when he had felt the little fluttering pulse like a bird under his fingers and her soft, slender flesh warm and crushed beneath the weight of his lips, his battle was called. He was in conflict. It raged in him, mind and body, it tore and drove him. He fought with himself. It was to Rosamund a pitiful, terrible spectacle.

She had him bridled and she held an iron whip. She rode him mercilessly, her head high and her heart hardened by fear, but, as a rider who feels beneath him the great, plunging strength of his half-tamed beast, she knew that she was only precariously master, that the force she controlled was horribly greater than her own. It was his love and his fear, his dependence upon her approval, that made him quiver and hold back, and clumsily obey. Perhaps her dominance was only a matter of days, of hours. It had become necessary again to plan a desperate escape.

She avoided him when she could and began to prowl along the base of the cliffs, her eyes searching their face. So she made, bit by bit, the round of the valley, to find everywhere the same forbidding formation. The landslide was a jagged jumble of enormous boulders. She attempted it, found herself a few feet up, and realized the impossibility of farther progress. For this attempt she had escaped from Brand, who was busy with a trap not far below.

In her excitement and her subsequent despair, she had forgotten him or the possibility of his detecting her purpose. She sat where she had climbed and looked about her with eyes of resignation. It was quite hopeless. She could not get away. She was a prisoner as

surely as if a key had been turned upon her solitude—ah, if it had only been a solitude! She drooped there at the end of the still valley, she was little and lost and lonely, crushed by the high, red walls and by her fears. She hid her face from the desolation without and, looking at the terror within, she moaned and moved her body to and fro and cried. So he found her when he came climbing up at a great, clattering, rough speed to crouch beside her, shaking her in his angry arms.

"You been lookin' for a way out!" he accused her fiercely. "You run away from me and climbed up here. You were trying to make a get-away from me while I was busy. You'd hev gone like that—without good-by? And now you're cryin'."

His arms, which were about her body, tightened, and he bent his head to them and stayed so, silent and still. She could feel the slight tremor of his pain. She tried to pull herself away a little, but that only drew her bonds to the point of hurting her.

"Please let me go, Brand," she said very softly. "Your arms hurt me. I would not have gone, without telling you good-by."

Very gradually his muscles loosened; he sat back on the ground, his eyes bent from her. His face was flushed and working.

"It makes you cry to stay here?" he threw out accusingly. It was so childish that it made her almost smile.

"It wasn't you that made me cry, Brand. But don't you understand how I must be anxious and unhappy? Why don't my friends come?"

He caught at her hands, held them down, threw back his head, and looked into her face sharply.

"Oh, so that's it! You're wanting all the while—to leave me?"

"Does that surprise you?" she was brave enough to ask, keeping her eyes

steadily on his, which were alight with pain and anger and jealous passion.

"Don't I work for you like a dog? Don't I give you my house and bed and food? And make a queen of you? And ask for nothin'? What more can a woman ask from livin'? Is there any man out there that'd do more for you—or as much?"

She nodded slowly and turned white.

"Yes, there is, Brand. One man." Then, as he rose, stiffening to his full height before her, she went on and knew that she was speaking in solemn warning to the buried beast in her own heart: "The one man I love."

He snarled like a cat and lifted his fists. She thought they were going to fall like iron on her head and breast. But he kept them up as he rushed down among the boulders, out of her sight, plunging through the bush, his trail marked by a swaying and rustling. She heard him splash through the stream and rattle up its farther bank.

She went down slowly and as slowly returned alone to the hut, wondering at her desperate courage, which, in reaction, had turned her sick. "Why did I say that?" she asked herself, in sheer astonishment. "Perhaps now he will come back and kill me." She hesitated whether or not to run away and hide until his fury and jealousy should have spent themselves. But she found a certain obstinacy in her will. She would stay and see this battle out, vanquish the beast, or—or—

CHAPTER XI.

For three long, awful days Brand did not open his lips. Nor did he look at Rosamund, except furtively, when he thought she could not see. He would not make pictures, he would not fish or trap. Presently they had nothing to eat except the goats' milk she had learned to get for herself and the berries and herbs she cooked. He sat huddled near the

door or hearth like a sick animal, or he went off to prowl and weep. His eyes were red and swollen in his hollow face.

She fancied that, instead of sleeping, he went to and fro in the valley and cursed his stars. Once, going to her door, she saw him at this tragic business. One night she waked from her sleep to find him bending over her. The wan moon was shining into his face and it was flushed with strong desire. She cried out, drew away against the wall, thrusting him back.

"Oh, you look like Mathew," she gasped. Then, speaking very slowly, each word on a hard breath, each word delivered with the weight and intention of a blow, added, "What did you kill him for?"

He trembled all over so that the frame of the bed shook.

"I'll not let you go to that other man. I'll not help you to get out. I'll *not*! You'll stay here till you're mine. I don't care if you cry. Why do I care? I'll make you smile some day."

"I trusted you," she said, weakly and sweetly. "You see how I've trusted you, Brand, from the first. I put your arm round me with my own hands."

He shook his head impatiently as if her words were flies.

"I'm stronger than you are. We're alone in this valley. God has already damned me!" Then, with a break of self-pity in his voice, he asked: "Are you sorry for me?"

"Yes. Yes. Yes."

"I knowed you were. There's somethin' gentle in you for all you act so hard, and it draws me. I've felt it. Ain't I strong and you weak? Ain't I needin' you—you, me? You *want* me to hold you."

"No. No. *No!* God help me!"

"Yes, you kin pray to Him and He'll listen, and that ain't fair. Don't you dare to cry!"

She quivered before him.

"Yes, that's how you get me. I can't

3—Ains.

bear you to tremble that a way. I can't abear you bein' scared, you, so beautiful and so slim and so white and so wise. Why did you come down to me? I warn't so damned afore you come. I had Mat, and my pictures." He had sunk down on the floor and was talking moodily, his hands moving across the rough hair on the hides which were her covering.

She tried desperately to control her shuddering, but her teeth chattered.

"I know there's a God," he said unexpectedly, and laid his hand on his chest. It was an awful confession of faith. She felt, even at that minute, the convincing thrill of it. "I know what He has asked me to do, but your tears are worser than His askin's." He stood up and gently put his hands upon her and laid her down and drew up the hides tenderly to her shoulders. "Go to sleep, girl. Don't trouble your heart with fears." He stroked the hide near her face and went out. There were both patience and exhaustion in his step.

She slipped out presently, took down his ax, and made it her bedfellow. She lay, wide-eyed, breathing deeply, until dawn.

On that day Brand went back to his old ways. Again he became the provider, the guardian, the servant, the pupil, the docile friend. He ate and drank normally. He spent some hours in a new employment, cutting long strips of rawhide from a freshly killed deer, which he had been skillful enough to bring down from the cliff top with a well-directed arrow. Her fears, however, were not lightened. She was horribly nervous and depressed. All that strange, shocking sense of well-being had left her. She breathed in awful suspense and watchfulness.

It was suddenly impossible for her to follow his thoughts, to understand his motives. His control and serenity seemed to cause her unhappiness, restlessness, rather a natural reassurance

and peace. Something prowled to and fro in her brain, an uneasy spirit. It must be that she did not trust him, that instinctively she knew that he was planning for her some horrible surprise.

At last the surprise came. It was at their most peaceful hour. Outside a mist filled the red-rimmed valley from edge to edge, a mist thick with moonlight so that the trees stood dimly in a substance like melted moonstone. The evening meal had been eaten and cleared away, the fire burned active and red. Brand sat half turned from her, busy with some of his new handiwork.

She sat in her chair, tense in spite of bodily fatigue, her fingers tight on the rude arms. She noticed how thin and strong and dark those fingers looked, with their broken and discolored nails, and wondered, with a startled realization, if the rest of her were physically as changed as they. She remembered that for weeks she had been without a mirror, had taken no single thought about her appearance, her beauty. She had bathed as she could; she had slept in her rags. They were all but impossible, hardly a covering any longer, torn here and worn there, strung together and held about her extreme thinness with leather thongs. She had tramped holes in her hunting boots. George's ring shone white on that strange hand of hers.

Brand spoke.

"Look at here, Rose," he said.

She started violently and turned sharply toward him where he rose towering beside her. He held a long serpent of braided rawhide in his hands. She shrank back, frightened at the brilliance of his eyes.

"Know what this is?" He smote a heavy end of the limber structure against her chair.

"A whip?" she asked, and saw herself bound and beaten to submission.

"No—a rope." He paid it through his hands, yard by yard. To her anxious

and puzzled eyes it seemed a mile in length. It lay coiled there on the grass rug beside her. "Don't you guess we'll need a rope?"

"What for?" she whispered. Her throat had gone dry and was throbbing.

"To climb up by—to-morrow, Rose. I'm agoin' to take you up the cliff."

She did not see him open the door, but thought he must have done so because the white mist through which he had led her home from his traps that afternoon was pouring into the room, veiling out the fire, thickening between her and his face. It turned red, then densely black. She tried to grope a way through it, saying, "The smoke," but it had turned her deaf and dumb and blind, and her body broke.

Brand was patting her hand and kneeling on the floor before her.

"Look up, Rose, look up. You won't hev to cry and tremble no more. Oh, God! You musn't die, not even to stay with me—not even to stay!"

CHAPTER XII.

Brand had her breakfast ready for her when, after a brief, early morning sleep, she woke to the blinding knowledge of release. He stood watching her eat, so she forced down the last tasteless drop of the mixture. Then he took the empty bowl, flung it down on the hearth, where it broke to pieces, and strode out. She got herself ready in a fog of suspense. Her sensations were confused. She was afraid of the cliff, but, besides that natural, physical fear, she had a tragic weight to suffer. She could not help but live with Brand through all the pangs of his sacrifice.

When she stepped out from the trees the valley had never seemed so beautifully desolate. She looked back once along the trail to Brand's cabin; its open door showed like the black mouth of a cave. The little breakfast fire had burned out.

Brand strode before her, silent-footed in his leather shoes, the great rope coiled heavily on his arm. He kept his eyes fixed on the ground and never spoke until they came to the pool. It lay like a shaken, green jewel, glittering in the light of that perfect September morning, the shaft of white water from above driving a piston deep down and churning iridescent bubbles to the surface.

Brand stood on the rock where Mathew had sprawled to catch his fish, and she came below. She dared not look at him or touch him, for fear of shivering his resolve. But she saw his face deep down there in the pool, a shaken, livid image, which looked, in the restless medium, as though it grimaced.

"Come on, then," he said.

He turned heavily, went along the foot of the precipice to a point where its sheerness was broken and gnawed. Here she found that he had cut some notches in the rock. As high as he could climb alone, without the help of the rope, he had prepared passage. This must have been his night work. With a gesture he told her to wait, tied an end of his rope to a tree, and began to climb. He soon left the easier first steps and made perilous, clinging progress, and, as he went, he fastened his rope here and there to points and pinnacles. At last, a crouching insect high above her, he called down to her in his most patient, wistful voice.

"Come on now, Rose," he said. "Lay hold of the rope and climb slow."

She drew in a sharp breath, steadied her heart, and clenched her cold fingers on the rope. Step by perilous step, inch by perilous inch, looking at the rocks until their jags and crevices were printed on her brain to come back to her terribly in dreams, Rosamund climbed. Sometimes she hung and looked up at him as a sick child looks for encouragement and help. He never failed then to smile with his lips, though his eyes kept their desperation. When she stood be-

side him on a narrow ledge, midway up the wall of her prison, she leaned against him and shut her eyes. It was only after many minutes, during which his arm steadied her body, that she learned how to look at the world that seemed to be pressing up against her face.

"It isn't so high really," she gasped.

"Why does it feel like this—so awful?"

"You ain't used to nothin' higher than your eyes," he said, "and there's no space afore you to steady you." As soon as he spoke she knew that his breathing was broken like an unhappy boy's. She drew from him carefully, her hands flattened and clinging like limpets to the rocks behind her.

"Let's go on before I get—worse," she urged shakily, trying to smile.

He collected the free half of the rope and now they went up together, she in his tracks, using his iron hand when he could free it, he fastening the braided rawhide as he went. Once he slipped back, almost tearing her from her hold, and she gave a hissing outcry.

"Brand—we almost went!"

"I wish we had of," he muttered, waited for her to recover her nerve.

They had to rest very often and even oftener to study out and test their way. It had been early morning when they left the hut and when Brand, kneeling, pulled Rosamund up bodily beside him to the flat top of the outside world, it was afternoon. Clouds had blown up the cañon and there had begun to be a desolate, flying, autumn wind. Rosamund lay there for a long time, hiding her face.

Hours passed over their animal stillness, while they rested from the fearful, long strain of their effort, of their danger. After a while he knelt back on his heels, but he would not look down at her. He kept his eyes to the valley, empty as a skull, full only of the sweeping sadness of the wind and flying leaves. The fall of the year rushed past them like a sigh.

"You gotter cross that log again," said Brand.

She got up, feeling inexpressibly broken.

"Will you help me?" she asked, lifting heavy eyes to his. She saw him whipped and shaken by overwhelming passion. His face twisted, he caught his hands together, wrenched them apart, with a terrible, tearing motion. His chest went up and down, as if a bellows were working under it.

"No!" he shouted. "No!"

For an instant she thought he meant to catch her, to fling her and himself down over the cliff. She ran back; he followed, stumbling. The trees came up around her and she fled among them down the bank toward the stream. She was swifter than he, for he ran like a blind man, striking against the trunks. She heard him stop and glanced back fearfully. He had dropped to his knees before a fallen log; he stretched out his arms across it.

"Won't you—tell me—good-by?" The words went through the roaring dimness of the primeval wood, rhymed with the desolate singing of the wind, the water, the hidden falls.

She stood, looking back. She dared not follow her look. Once within his grasp the beast might never again be under her control. But he tore her heart.

"Good-by. Good-by!" she sobbed out her farewell, then went on slowly. There lay the swift water and the log. She looked up at him again. His eyes were upon her, but he had not moved.

She walked carefully, with curious steadiness, across the bridge, aware that she had become, in these wild weeks, extraordinarily mistress of her body. On the game trail she stopped. Brand was now out of her sight. She waited and felt her heart slow from its mad throbbing into stillness. There was movement above her among the trees. Was he coming after her?

She trembled forward a few steps, waited. There came a rattle of stones. Something had fallen down the cliff. Instantly, without any thought at all, she ran back across the log, stormed up the bank. He had left the place where he had watched her go and she hurried, breathless, to the top of the precipice. He was not there.

She saw the straining rope tied to one of the firs. Then he was climbing down. She stood and waited. She could hear the shifting and rattling of his desperately swift descent. He must have thrown his body from point to point, must have slid and dropped. In an incredibly brief time the rope stopped its jerking and twisting. She crept to the edge and, keeping herself hidden, looked down.

Yes, there he stood, not far from the pool, facing the circular valley. The sun was now setting and the clouds were stained. That great wind blew across him and lifted from him to her. There was no human thing besides himself, no speech, no step, no smile. He stood with hanging hands, utterly still and silent, facing that steady wind, that desolate sky.

Rosamund watched him until she felt ashamed and hid her face like a traitor and turned it back toward the cañon trail.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Chicago and Northwestern station at this hour was crowded; the afternoon expresses were arriving and leaving for and from the coasts; the Los Angeles Limited, the Overland Limited, their gates alight with the hour and minute of departure, flanked by the chalked boards of stations, and besieged by serpents of impatient passengers or more impatient friends. The stifling September atmosphere, caught and held under the dome, was pungent with smoke and steam, cinders and desert dust; it vibrated with the anxiety and

gayety, the restlessness, preoccupation, sorrow, and suspense of travelers. Human dramas were here caught in transit, their loose ends seemed to be floating, entangling, keeping themselves distinct only by a distressful effort.

The big waiting engines blew up puffs of steam, bells were ringing and there was a continual grinding of iron wheels. A great inhuman voice bellowed reverberating information from somewhere; stations were being called, trumpetsful of sound unintelligible except to the expectant and informed ear.

George Ferguson looked for the fiftieth time that minute at the big, lighted clock, a monstrous clock which in itself suggested the motions of a machinemade universe. He had still five, no, four and a half, minutes to wait before the train could be in. It was on time, the bulletin board had already told him. Four and a half minutes between him and Rosamund! He moistened his lips. She was now being drawn along the clicking rails, near, near, nearer.

He would certainly never let her go out of his sight again. He had been insane to let her travel into the woods with such a mad fool as Lilith Dickens. He might have known they'd get into disastrous trouble. Rose lost for eight weeks without his knowing it! He, working at his confounded etching back there in the New York studio, day by day, glad of the work and the heat because they kept his mind occupied, assured that she couldn't be sending him letters while she was packing in the hills, and all the while Lilith had been lying, out of her head, in a God-forsaken Idaho town called Timber, and his Rosa Mundi had been given up for dead! Some fool had actually brought in word of her drowning. The careless women had furnished their guide with no addresses, no instructions in case of accident. With Rosamund lost and Lilith out of her head, the whole expedition

might have been in the arctic regions for all the chance it had of getting word to the East of its disasters.

George turned back at the end of his traffic-interrupted beat. Rosamund lost for eight weeks, coming in, alone, afoot, starved, ragged, to Timber, to find her friend unconscious. Then, at last, the telegrams: To Dickens—poor chap!—"Meet Lilith trained nurse Salt Lake City. Has been dangerously ill. Brain fever. Better, but still very weak and not herself. Must travel very slowly." And to him: "Have been lost in the hills, taken care of, but cut off from communication. Just returned to Timber. Lilith too ill to furnish information. Will take her to Salt Lake City to meet Dickens. Start East from there alone. Meet me Chicago four-thirty p. m. September thirtieth."

It was now four and a half—no, three—minutes of being that four-thirty p. m. of September thirtieth, and here was George, white and strung with excitement, happiness, suspense, and the anger of the anxious male. He bore, however, except for his whiteness, his usual composed and witty air; he would not have been suspected of being a racked lover, unless those rapid, brilliant searchings of the clock had betrayed him.

He was nearest to the gate when it opened and those shrewd, long-lashed hunter's eyes picked up the passengers as they defiled, first one by one, then in small groups, then in a steady stream. The tall, dark-faced, swift-stepping woman, however, had almost passed him before he caught her elbow.

"Rosamund!"

She stood and looked up. Her eyes shocked all his heart. He drew her out of the crowd, conscious of the thin tenseness of her body and that her lips were pressed into a white line. He would not, even now at close, searching attention, have recognized her deeply bronzed, thin face, its cheeks chiseled away, its eyes enlarged, deepened into a bright sav-

agery of evasiveness; secret eyes they had become, the faintly smiling self-possession startled out of them. What had happened to his beautiful rose of the world? Was she any longer beautiful? A thousand times more so, his artist acuteness told him; but in a fashion so alien that it was not readily recognizable.

She wore the traveling suit in which she had said good-by to him, but it hung loose and she moved strongly in it. She was all bone and muscle and tight nerves. The child had suffered outrageously, he told his pity. She had, however, a look of shining, splendid strength. Her teeth blazed white in the dark face and her gray-green eyes were clear and wild as forest pools. But they were shy eyes, and Rosamund had never been shy, not even with him, who, as a lover, might have known her shyness.

"How terrible the crowd is!" she gasped. "Can't we escape? Have you a motor?"

"Of course. I'm stopping with the Macks. You're to go there." She pulled back with a frightened look, then blushed deeply up to the sun-faded gold at her temples.

"How silly I am! That will be nice—and comfortable. George"—this as they settled in the discreet, hospitable limousine, the chauffeur assuming all material responsibility—"George, I've been through unspeakable things."

She looked up at him, indeed, he thought, as if she were standing below him in some shadowed depth of country under the surface of his world. He drew her hands up, stripped off their gloves, and uttered a startled oath.

"Rosa, your hands, your beautiful, dear hands!"

She laughed shakily, tears in a little dew all along her eyelashes.

"Yes, aren't they horrid? I wonder how Francie's maid will look when she sees them? They're *claws*."

He kissed them softly, repeatedly, be-

hind the stolid, liveried backs visible through glass.

"I'll never let you go again. The missing you was like hunger. Dearest, if I'd known!"

"I'm glad you didn't know until it was all over. Some day I'll tell you."

But, strangely, when it came to the telling—that afternoon she was instantly put to bed under Francie's horrified eyes and the maid's shocked, whispering attendance—the next afternoon, Rosamund found herself improvising. It was not a false account she gave, but it was empty of detail. She had wandered about, she said falteringly, her fingers moving restlessly in his; she had hurt herself; she had been taken care of by—some lonely ranchers. Yes, they had been queer, surly people. It had been impossible for them to send word down to Timber.

"Oh, George, don't ask me to talk about it, please. I can't, I can't!" And, throwing herself against him in a manner entirely foreign to her old reserve, she had clung and wept; this—of all places for such extravagant emotion—in a compartment of the New York Special. George, quite terrified by her outburst, soothed her with his hands and lips, holding her close; looked across the dear, dull, rough, golden head, its gloss burned out, its smooth evenness broken and wild, to the flying fields, a trouble growing in his experienced, young, worldly eyes.

"We'll be married at once," he said, flinging the soft words as though into the set face of a rival, "as soon as we get back, and I'll take you away—to Europe."

She said nothing, but lay still against his breast.

CHAPTER XIV.

But in New York George found, as men have found before him, that there was a great Moloch of conventionality to whom he was forced to sacrifice the

impatient and anxious tenderness of his desire. Rosamund, it appeared, had relations whom haste shocked. They had always, it seemed, looked forward to Rosamund's wedding; she was the only full-grown representative of Kerr youth. They had dreamed of her as a beautiful bride; there was an ancestral veil of realest lace, and that lace tripped and tangled the rapid feet of love. It seemed, also, that certain very young cousins had been lately born for the express purpose of holding up a satin train; there were girl friends who carried a school-time promise of Rosamund's next to their faithful hearts.

George, too, discovered that his own mother wanted—yes, had always wanted—to see George married at the Church of All Souls. She had arranged this matter with Rosamund's great-aunt; a bishop had even been approached. George laughed, an unpleasant laugh, painful to a mother's feelings, and yielded, sorely aware of Rosamund's indifference to the delay.

She threw herself with a great deal of energy into these barbaric preparations. She was always either busy or tired. A great and solemn machinery had been put into motion at once for the restoration of her former beauty, so that she was now much more like his former Rosamund: her hair had its glisten, her skin was fair again, her hands lovely, her figure, in its agile slimness, had never been better adapted to the straight Florentine gown—it was the despairing envy of her friends. George had a hundred compliments for his bride.

And he, too, felt the deeper, stronger color that had been transfused through all her beauty. It was as if the clear window crystal had been gorgeously tinted and put between him and a setting sun. There was a perilous, stormy warmth in Rosamund's transformation, which excited and pained him. For, to his intuitions, her reserve, almost her deceit,

had availed her very little and in her evasions of him during these weeks of preparation she betrayed her knowledge of his unspoken perspicacity. They were not happy during the months between her return and the enormous wedding feast, which was definitely fixed for January.

George had her completely to himself for an interview on Christmas Day. There had been a family dinner and afterward the great-aunts and the cousins, married and single, with or without their offspring, had gathered around a giant Christmas tree. From this noisy, chattering, unnaturally cordial throng, Rosamund had escaped, unnoticed, and was presently found by George. She was half hidden by the curtain of a window seat at the end of an upper hallway, where he, hurrying on her track, discovered her from a turn of the stairs.

He hung for an instant, doubtful, his hand tightening on the balustrade, and his lips pressed together. She was sitting quite still with her hands locked rigidly together about her knees, her eyes staring straight beyond her, seeing evidently nothing of her surroundings. He was reminded of a night of spring storm, of an indigo window square, and of a tawny, flying figure. The window back of her now held a turning flurry of snowflakes, restless, powdery stars.

Her soft, black dress, with its long, clinging sleeves and open neck, cut out her white hands and throat as though they had been made of paper. Her lips were tremulous. He could see a nervous motion in her throat, as if she swallowed tears. He hesitated until, bending her chin down, she closed her lids and bright drops poured down her cheeks; then he sprang up the rest of the flight and was immediately beside her.

"Rosamund"—he put a cold, urgent touch upon her—"you can't expect me to endure this sort of thing. What kind of blind fool do you take me for?"

She pressed her head against him and fought for self-control.

"It isn't—anything," she managed to enunciate. "I do truly love you, George."

He moved uneasily, not caressing her, though the weight of her head seemed to beg for tenderness.

"I haven't asked you to confide in me," George went on, his fine, even tones undisturbed, "because that's not my way. You must tell me things or not, as you please. Evidently you have been through some experience that you want to keep from me. Just as evidently it's made you unhappy. Can't I see all that? Rosamund, you look like a haunted woman."

At that she cringed and put her hands up, first against him, as if to thrust him violently away, and then tight against her own face.

"Haunted!" she repeated shakenly. "Oh, I am!"

After that, silence, in which the whispered word went on and on, traveling into George's consciousness in the awful way of words. Perhaps she tried to follow it on that mysterious journey, for presently she caught at his hand and said:

"Stop thinking!"

He laughed his short, reserved, ironic laugh.

"Yes, and feeling and moving and breathing, I suppose. And"—in a lower key—"and loving you. Shall I stop that, Rosamund?"

"Can you?"

"I've never tried." Another silence to which he contributed a hard sigh and drew back from her, looking down with a bitter look into her quickly lifted eyes. "So you're going to keep your secret. In a fortnight," he added, from a few steps along the hall, "you'll be my wife. If, between now and then, you want to tell me anything, I'll not be as hard a listener as, perhaps, you imagine. I don't"—his voice shook—"sit in judg-

ment upon the people I love. I can't endure such people to mistrust me, to be afraid of me. You whip my heart, Rose, truly you do."

He walked away and down the stairs, where she heard his resolute good-bys and the banging of the front door. But she was a haunted woman: she could see only a figure standing with its face to a lost sunset and a pouring wind.

It was at a noisy woman's lunch, a New Year's celebration, given to Rosamund by her friends as a farewell to her maidenhood, when the tiny spark fell upon all this gunpowder piled up in her brain, laid in trains along her exhausted nerves. There was champagne, some of the old Kerr stock, at this luncheon, and all the bright, pretty, startling faces were flushed, the tongues riotous. Rosamund herself was brilliant, not merely indolently receptive of other people's brilliances, as had been her habit. She answered teasing and toasts with apt, swift words. But all the while she looked tenderly into these baffling, bright, friendly seeming eyes as if she were trying a key in locked doors.

"You know, I'm just beginning really to love Rosamund, now that she's going. I was always afraid of her until to-day," said Florence Raymond to May Yardley.

"Aren't you afraid now?" suggested May.

Rosamund leaned toward them.

"What are you saying, Florrie? Afraid of me?"

There was a tiny pause of some discomfort and the two murmurers flushed. But Florrie braved it out with her small, boyish swagger, wagging her bobbed hair and blowing smoke from her cigarette.

"Yes, I always was, Rosamund. I might as well be out with it. I'm scared to death of you. Well, why shouldn't I be? I'm about as much in your class as that Centaur in the picture was in

Minerva's." She lifted her small light hand, cigarette and all, to point the eyes of the table to a photograph in an obscure corner of the dining room.

Rosamund's eyes followed first and made out the wild, crouching, pitiful, patient figure. She stood up slowly, seeming to be thrust up from her seat by some smooth mechanism outside of herself. Her fork fell on her plate. She bent forward, white lips apart, drawn back in a strained smile. The pupils of her eyes widened enormously.

"Yes," she said, as if she were making the most comprehensible comment in the world, "he did look just like that."

And then she went into hysterics and from that into a prolonged, alarming faintness.

CHAPTER XV.

The papers presently announced that, owing to a sudden illness of Miss Rosamund Kerr—with all possible comments and embroideries—her wedding with Mr. George Ferguson, also with every possible comment and embroidery, was postponed.

Rosamund was, indeed, desperately ill, a nervous breakdown of an extreme sort, and, after the first very terrifying symptoms were brought under control, she was condemned to an indefinite rest cure; solitude, a rigid routine of sleep, massage, exercise, occupation, trained nurses in attendance and absolutely no intercourse with the outside, or even with the affectionate inside, world. For this interminable tragic business, George's mother offered her country place, which was admirably kept during the winter months by elderly, quiet servants, was within easy reach of a motoring New York specialist and had the advantage of space, beauty, and pure ocean air.

Rosamund was carried into the great living room on a February day, silent and bright with deep snow. The nurse

wondered why her patient's pulse fluttered and sank during the passage past the window seat to the wide stairs. She threw an interrogatory glance at the second nurse and they both made a mental note to pass this on to the physician. Rosamund saw and smiled. Much could he make of that emotional disturbance! He had not seen her on that spring night answer the calling of the storm. The nurse gave her a hypodermic and brought her into unremembering, unpitied sleep.

At the base of every nervous disorder, we are told by the research magician, there lies a conflict of the will. In Rosamund's case there were two conflicts; one conscious, and a daily, hourly torment to her heart; the other forcibly kept by a mysterious watchdog out of her grasp, beneath the surface of her mind. During the months of her illness, when she lay and wrestled with her silent devil, she gained a very complete knowledge of her primary, conscious conflict.

There was that in her, born or indulged or acquired in youth, which resisted all the fine obscurities of cultivated living. The smother of wedding preparations, the accumulating details, the tiny recurrent duties toward relations, dressmakers, storekeepers, even the controlled and exquisite duty of her relationship to George—from these, the wild soul of her, newly drunk with a horrible liberty, revolted. In these days she was unbearably homesick for the valley. Common sense and convention protested unavailingly against this homesickness. She would lie on her couch in the winter sun, seeing in a long mirror with concealed amusement the reflection of that slim, pale, refined invalid until she bit her lip and the vision danced in tears. She could barely control hysteria.

She wanted—and what specialist or trained nurse could have read or understood her craving?—hunger and cold,

the scorching heat of the sun on her body, heavy work that broke such delicate mother-of-pearl finger nails. She wanted fear, for a bedfellow, the throbbing intoxicant of suspense. She wanted the daily battle with a master, who was at the same time a slave. She wanted to pit her wit against his strength, to overcome the fear-inspiring tyrant by a tear or a smile.

She felt, sometimes, the weight of his hand on her neck, a masterful and yet timid burden. But it was here that the watchdog growled and Rosamund, half in a dream, let her eyes widen and grow vague while vivid, highly colored pictures took the place of thought and diverted her consciousness from that other utterly inadmissible desire which was drawing the color from her lips.

Through widened, unseeing eyes she saw Brand driving her, with red look and lifted lip, out from his hearth into the icy night; she saw him stalking before her, a club in his hand, she stumbling along the difficult trail, bent under the weight of his catch or kill. She smelled the pungent odor of his cooking and ate like a dog there at his feet. She saw the cliff-imprisoned night and heard its lonely voices; saw Brand lying like a log near her open door. She felt with physical agony the bruising grip of Mathew's arms, the ruthless clutching of his fingers.

The mirror, swimming again into vision, startled her to full consciousness. Rosamund Kerr, in lace and silk, slender feet crossed, long, slim hands lying slack there, one over the other, golden hair sleek about her head, Rosamund Kerr, with a pale, Sphinx face, patient lips, sad and arrogant eyes—and the long white throat. Here a rough voice almost audibly ground out: "A pale-faced, yeller-haired doll baby in trousers, with a neck like a tame, white goose." Whereupon Rosamund, the nervous invalid, broke into ecstatic laughter, which, not being possible of

explanation, ended in sobbing and hypodermics and drugged sleep.

So she kept her secrets even from herself, fought vainly against her illness, and made slow headway toward normality. She wanted to see George. She missed him with all her consciousness and grieved for him. But she would not see him. He sent her a garden of flowers, a library of books, pathetic, restrained notes that, even in their enforced restraint, quivered with an agony of anxious longing. She made up her mind a hundred times to call him to her, she had the telephone at her lips, shaped to his number, but some inner reluctance forbade the summons. She could not see him. It was like trying to lift a marble mountain.

The snow melted. From her windows she watched spring come. Soon the birds piped to her heart, little sap-sweet winds poured past blinds and curtains, there was a dance of tiny freckling leaves against a grayish April sky, clouds came in round puffs, crossed by arrowy, eager flights of birds.

Rosamund was allowed to walk and at last one morning she went up to the wooded height and looked down at the sea. It was lipping that day like a child, and across all its polished surface it had the blue of a star sapphire. The nurse arranged a rug and cushions on the earth and left Rosamund with a book.

She kept up a pretense of reading until the fluttering, white figure had definitely disappeared under the pines. Then she stood up and lifted her breast to breathe deep from the very horizon of the sea. A will for action had come upon her and decision was forming in her mind.

That afternoon she sent for George. She arranged carefully the details of their meeting. It should be in the evening at twilight, just before dinner. He would dine alone—the doctor refusing to allow her more than an hour's inter-

view—and go back by motor afterward to town. She had a fire on the hearth, but no other light, and she sat in the big chair of little carved lions' heads, where she had sat once before and tried to explain herself to him.

George, schooled all day to composure, came up the length of the room toward her with restrained, smiling excitement. She stood up and he drew her to him as carefully as if she were made of snowflake dust. She put her hand on either side of his face and looked into his eyes, where her lover for an instant revealed himself. She turned quickly away from the revelation, closing her lids; let go of him and went to her chair.

"I am sorry. I am sorry," she faltered.

"You shouldn't be anything but glad to-day, Rose. I feel as if I were drunk with strong wine."

And in fact his thin face glowed. He had evidently suffered and just as evidently forced himself to keep physically fit, for he looked lean and as hard as hickory, and must have been rowing or hunting, for he was tanned. To Rosamund's eyes, used to the insipid freshness of trained nurses and the jaded cheerfulness of her doctor, he had a vivid, outdoor beauty of health that smote her senses like salt wind. He tried to sit quietly near her, lighted a cigarette, and leaned back, but it was no use. He was up, moving to and fro across the room and at last forcing himself to stand under the mantel where he could best drink up the sight of her.

"I hope I'll be good," he said. "I'm not going to ask you questions or to be at all exciting. Am I exciting, Rosa Mundi?"

"Yes, I'm afraid you are, rather. But that won't hurt me." She breathed deeply. It was an effort to fence with him. She wished suddenly that he would take her in his arms and force her to forget everything except himself.

But George had been coached by a nerve specialist of the old school and stayed by the mantel, as tight as a bowstring, vibrant for the speeding of arrows, but held.

"I sent for you, not because I wanted to see you," Rosamund began, with a trace of her old, self-mocking, sophisticated smile, "that reason would have had you here all winter. I've wanted you always. But I've sent for you to listen to a confession."

He just stirred, a sort of ripple going along his tense length. She set her eyes upon him with an effort and kept them frank and steady.

"You were perfectly right when you accused me on Christmas Day of whipping your heart with reserve and concealment. It was worse than concealment really, for I think I lied to you. I fancied I was held by a sort of trust, a vow of secrecy, but I admit to myself now that I was afraid—and ashamed, of my experience. Besides, it was all but unbelievable. Perhaps I was afraid you'd think me mad."

"Oh, no," he protested keenly, "you weren't afraid of that. I haven't been living in New-York. I've been about to the lonely places of the earth, and the more curiously populated places. I've told you some of the things I've seen and been forced to believe in seeing. I've even told you some of the unbelievable things I've done. You weren't afraid I'd think you mad."

"No, I wasn't. I won't try to tell you what I was afraid of, then. I do want to be perfectly straight with you about it all. George; do you remember a strange night, the night here in this room, when there was a storm?"

George, she saw with a startled feeling, had turned white.

"The night when you promised to marry me," he answered steadily. "I remember every detail of it."

"Then you remember my telling you that always I've had a desire——"

"To fight, to work, to love—with your hands," he whispered. "Yes."

"And you told me"—she shook strongly and strongly controlled the involuntary shudder—"that I must not call back the beast."

He nodded, his eyes sharpening into a rapier look.

"I've met the beast and tamed him and deserted him, George. And it is the beast that haunts me. Poor beast!" She gazed ahead of her with a face of wistful beauty. "I owe him a reparation. George, if a man laid down of his own will more than his life for you, could you walk out of his life and never go back to make amends?"

George stood silent, the fire whispering wordy suggestions to his silence and the spring twilight sifting green dust into the room.

"There was a woman once," he said at last, in a very low voice, not looking at her, "out of whose life I walked in such a fashion. I've always thought that silence was the best amends between a woman and a man, Rosamund."

Her hands sought each other and found cold comfort.

"Not in this case. I'll tell it to you. I'll leave it to you. This man is a lost man, George. And I—we—should, I think, try to help him. He is a prisoner and I should like to find for him some merciful escape. And he's an artist, too." She half smiled, an exquisite, maternal smile, remembering Brand's handiwork. "My poor beast! He can't climb up to the world and make a fresh start, because in real fact he has been a beast. But I wonder if we can't give him a fresh start?"

"Yes? Well, let me hear."

Again the fire whispered indistinguishable hints while Rosamund stared into it until the red embers shaped themselves to a tumbled cañon and a scarlet, dog-faced rock. She began her story in a careful, low voice, determined to be

temperate and sparse of emotion. But, in spite of her will, the terrible, colorful experience supplied its own drama. It could not be told coolly.

There were moments when she must put her hand over her eyes to hide from George what the recital cost her. He was an entirely silent listener, stood without motion, hardly breathing, his shrewd eyes shining into her mind through the tiny openings of her spoken words, burning like a ray through the defenses which she was herself unconscious of erecting.

At the end, when she tried to paint for him the figure of Brand standing to face the windy, darkening desolation, she found her breast lifting, tears in her throat. She made a battle of raising her eyes to George's.

She found him again white, his face shut like marble, his eyes brilliant and hostile.

"Why do you look—like that?" she faltered, rising suddenly to meet some incomprehensible crisis. George took a step forward so that his face was just above hers. He did not touch her, but his body, so near, was quivering against the control he put upon it. He bent his head a trifle so that his eyes shot their strange light through and through her brain.

"And you really think, Rosamund," he said in a light, even voice, as steady as a skillful blade, "that it is to rescue this killer and to give him a fresh start that you want to go back? Do you really believe that you are this condescending *Lady Bountiful* you've just now been painting yourself for my benefit?"

She stepped back from him, her blood pounding in a glorious, releasing sort of anger.

"What are you trying to tell me, George?"

He moved away, turned, and began to walk from her along the room. He was fighting a fearful storm of feeling, but

he was well able to ride such storms and, near the door, where he took up his hat and coat, he turned a composed, even smiling face to her.

She was standing there before the little fire, touched by its ruddiness, made visible as faintly as he, but as effectively. The strong color of her anger seemed to burn up in her hair and eyes and cheeks, in her scarlet mouth, as the pallor of his anger whitely illuminated him against the dusk.

"I will say good night," he said, and went quickly out. She heard his ringing steps across the wide porch and the brick terrace, and presently the chugging and humming of his motor.

He tried to reveal her to herself, but she would not accept the revelation. She stood there tearing his words to pieces in her proud, highly trained spirit, throwing them from her as if they were vile and tainted rags. He had accused her of something unspeakable and he had left her to tremble and burn with his accusation.

CHAPTER XVI.

That night Rosamund forced down her light supper, endured her massage, and allowed herself to be put to bed. Her windows were opened wide to the pensive night; the nurse turned off the electricity and went out softly with her practiced, soothing "Good night." Rosamund's face changed in the darkness, her eyes dilated to gather in the vague, starry remnants of light, her cheeks began to burn and tingle, the strong pumping of her heart sent the blood loudly to her measuring pulses. She had a feeling of exultant health, of strength, of wild purpose.

She had confessed and she had been insulted. Now she was free to follow the dictates of what she called her conscience. She did not remember that God was not in the earthquake or the whirlwind, but in the still, small voice.

The call of her blood was neither still nor small. It was a riot in her body and a blindness in her brain. A wind seemed to blow across the world. It smelled of red cliffs and falling water; it had a tang of firs.

She would go back and make amends and expiate her desertion. She would take money to Brand and preach courage to him and help him escape. She would arrange all the details of his evasion and disguise—he would have to assume a name—of his flight from San Francisco to some foreign country. Then, by keeping in touch with him, she could encourage his talents, see that he had some training. Money would do it all. The *Lady Bountiful* glowed softly.

But to make a beginning in this kind, remorseful, and rewarding rescue, she would have to go back in person to the terrible valley. She dared not confide the secret of Brand's hiding place. He was, after all, in the eyes of the law, not an animal, wounded into blind destructiveness, but a murderer, convicted and escaped, condemned to death. If George refused to help her, failed to understand her intentions—again anger turned her heart over in her wild breast—then she would work out the expiation for her ingratitude, her cold acceptance of Brand's sacrifice—alone.

The skill of the civilized woman allied itself with the impulse of a savage. She was all liteness, mind and body, that night. She would have slipped through a detaining hand like water.

It was with the noiselessness of a wildcat that she made her preparations, dressed in a dark suit and hat and veil, assured herself of an ample cash supply and a check book, and sat down at her little mahogany desk to write. She had lighted only a single bulb and had shaded it heavily with a silk scarf. The night nurse, who imagined her patient to all intents and purposes cured, had lately slept with the unproverbial

soundness of all sleeping trained nurses. Rosamund's pen ran softly, smoothly.

DEAR MISS LAY: You are not to be in the least alarmed at my departure. It is the result of the talk I had yesterday with Mr. Ferguson, and before you start any alarm I absolutely conjure you to take him only into your confidence. He will understand and know what must not be done. I should like my going away to remain a secret between you, Miss Raeburn, and Mr. Ferguson. If possible, it should be kept even from Doctor Nichols. I think Mr. Ferguson will agree with me as to the imperative wisdom of such absolute secrecy. I should be back again in a few weeks, perhaps sooner, and you will find me then completely well. I have analyzed my own condition, discovered its cause, and am now taking the one step necessary for an entire cure. So you see this rather unconventional escape is the result of very sober, scientific thought. Please be my good friend in this, Miss Lay, and I shall never forget it. You have been such a kind, patient, understanding nurse. And I am trusting you. It is really and seriously a very important trust.

Yours quite steadily and calmly,
ROSAMUND KERR.

To George she wrote a line:

You were a little too keen of wit, dear George, and not quite keen enough of sympathy. I find that I must act alone.

These two papers she folded, addressed, and pinned to her rumpled pillow.

The rest of her escape was a thrilling episode, successfully accomplished. She went out through her bathroom, stole past the very bed of the day nurse, down a back hall, a servants' staircase, and let herself out by a side door into the dewy, sweet-smelling garden, earthy and fresh, perfumed with new violets and pushing hyacinth blades.

Her eyes, trained in the valley, followed the wan, flickering pathways past dark, clumpy hedges across the young, wet grass under the trees. She walked below late, dim stars, along familiar lanes and roads to a less familiar station, where she veiled her face and bought a ticket to the city, boarding a sleepy, late train.

In the glaring, sparsely populated spaces of the Pennsylvania Station, lighted like a huge temple to the twin gods of Change and Speed, she discovered that there was a midnight express westward and she managed to catch it by a narrow, breathless margin. Dawn found her lying in a compartment berth, watching very calmly, with bright eyes, the flush of a rising sun over the Pennsylvania woods, still bare of anything but the mist of coming green; the wet, last autumnal leaves glittering like copper about the winking, backward passage of their trunks.

Rosamund traveled with a cool intensity of purpose. She had no quivers of doubt or fear. The long, fevered, hysterical months had been lived through and had tortured her into this immutable resolve. She was no longer the summoner. It was the beast now that called imperatively. She had ridden him with whip and curb and spur; now the bit was in his teeth. He was long past her guiding. He was lashing her through strange, high-colored lands. She had the exultation of his unbridled speed and strength. She did not care now what happened to her. The mad thing in her breast exulted.

She passed through the spring snowstorms and the spring rains and reached the Idaho town on a blazing mountain midday. There she took a room at the queer, bald hotel and made arrangements for the hiring of a guide, a riding horse, and two pack animals. With this little outfit she started, her heart singing for joy of the saddle and the familiar, rocking progress.

All that day and the next she plodded across gray-green flats on muddy roads and trails, until they nosed their way into the mountain range, which for forty-eight hours had stood mocking at their creeping progress toward its foot hills.

Her taciturn, puzzled guide made camp, cooked, hobbled and unhobbled,

packed and unpacked his horses without asking questions, with very little speech of any kind. His silent, clear-eyed employer was perhaps, he thought, a little madder than most "dudes." But not so much. They were entirely incomprehensible, anyway, with their insane, objectless craving for travel and discomfort.

For him and his kind this sort of thing was labor, always had been, always would be, but to the "dudes" it was a sort of intoxicant; they would throw their arms about and cry aloud in an inexplicable appreciation and excitement. This woman, to be sure, did not cry aloud with her tongue, but with her eyes. She spoke soberly and softly, had a good head for trails, and was cool in emergencies. She rode admirably. The guide liked her, for all her madness. His face fell blankly when, at Timber, he was summarily dismissed.

He asked, on that afternoon, his first question, and his last.

"How you goin' to git back, lady?"

"Ah, I'm not thinking of back trails yet, Tom; I'm thinking of the out trails," said Rosamund, her face alight, and she bade him a kindly good-by with no appearance of regret.

At Timber she was confronted with her first real difficulty. How, she puzzled in the hideous bedroom of the Timber Road House, how could she plausibly leave Timber without a guide and account to its watchful inhabitants for a prolonged absence, or no return? For Brand, she knew, if she succeeded in persuading him to leave the refuge of his valley, must not go out of the wilderness by way of Timber or by any other town in which he might be remembered or recognized.

She sat at her uncurtained window and studied government maps and cudged her wits. Fortune came to her aid. By a mere chance of overhearing, she discovered that a party had left with

a pack train on the morning of her arrival, to cross the range by her very trail. She overheard some details of names, and personal appearances, and, by a clever use of this information, she convinced the road-house keeper that she was a belated member of this party, that it was imperative for her to overtake them, that she must start instantly on their tracks, and, with a single guide and no pack horse, and, traveling light, must overtake the people before night-fall. The guide and horses were found and Rosamund made her start at daybreak.

CHAPTER XVII.

She had the dawn at her back; the mountain pass before her was veiled in mist. The air was as eager as the morning star, and thrilled her blood. The light came without sound. The pony's feet went as if in stealth, water ran away up the cañon, a coyote once threw out his long-drawn hysterical greeting to the sun. Up they climbed and up the trail, familiar to Rosamund's feet, along which she had dragged her aching, half-starved body after her liberation from the valley.

Before many miles the trail took on its determined character of narrow giddiness. It began its doubling on the steep cañon side. Rosamund, riding with lifted eyes, saw how it was caught up in silver loops away and away among the rising intricacies of the range. The guide pointed to a creeping pack train very far above them.

"There's your folks," he said.

She nodded gravely.

"Oh," she said, "after we get well along, I'll send you back. I know this trail. I was over it last year."

"I know. You was the lady that got lost."

Rosamund flushed. It was like a Western town not to show any sign of recalling her misadventures.

"Yes. Well, this time I shan't get

lost. There's just this one trail to follow and my friends are almost in sight. After lunch you may go back."

He nodded and they went on. At noon they came in sight of the red rock and Rosamund slipped down from her horse. She and the boy shared a lunch of sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs and sweet chocolate. Then she bade him good afternoon and he had no choice but to turn back to Timber. She waved to him reassuringly at several turns, then mounted, and let him see her start slowly on her upward way. In fact, she plodded steadily until she came to the camping ground where Lilith had dropped from her saddle, exhausted and in tears. There she waited until she knew the guide was well out of sight, turned loose her pony, and started toward the dog-faced idol on foot.

She followed step by step her former passage, and, in what seemed very short time—before late afternoon—she found herself near the fallen tree, within sight of the red cliffs and hearing of the hollow-sounding waterfall. It was a wild sort of home-coming, and she was shaken with suspense. What had the long, cold winter done to Brand? Would he be living? Would he hear her calling from the top of the wall? She commanded her quivering and crossed the log.

From there she mounted on winged feet and came past the place where he had fallen and held out his empty hands, to the place where they had climbed out of the closed valley. His rope was still there, fastened about the bole of a stout tree. She went to the edge and looked over. The wonderful, light, leaf green and blossom white of spring decked the valley, its stream ran full and white, a thread of smoke crept up among the distant trees. He was alive, and safe.

She had a cautious impulse, the last remnant of reason in her, to steal up on him and see him before he knew that she had come back. She looked

down along the steep cliff and followed the taut rope railing with an appraising look. She remembered how quickly and easily, carelessly even, he had made his descent. She smiled a tight, queer smile and set her hands to the rope.

Fifteen minutes later she hung, ten feet above the valley; the rawhide, soaked and dried and frozen over and over, had weakened. It snapped in her hands and she fell.

She was not hurt; at the time not even dismayed by this cutting-off of her retreat. She was sure of her beast, his gentleness and his subjection—or so she told herself. She got up and, without glancing up at the dizzy trail above her, she began to move, swiftly and silently, through Brand's trees. The sun was beginning to set; the whole valley was radiant, reassuring, sweet. She came to the remembered path and saw the open door of his cabin. A quick fire burned.

She came very cautiously now, noiselessly, step by step. There was a strange, warning tumult in her brain. The masked face of her fear, of her secret impulse, was coming very close now to her consciousness. She could not much longer keep the pose of *Lady Bountiful*. When a mad dream, repeated over and over, enacted at last almost as in a dream, comes to its climax in reality, there is often such a shrewd awakening—it is the last safeguard against deeds of violence. Rosamund crept under Brand's window and looked in.

At first she thought that Mathew had come to life, then she knew that the crouching figure was Brand, himself. Until that instant the man had always been contrasted with an image of his more brutal companion, but now he came to her eyes in quick superimposition upon the image of George Ferguson. More, Brand had changed. The long dread months of loneliness and winter, without human speech or smile, lived out, horrible, lagging hour by hour

of light and darkness, near the grave of his dead comrade, near the bed of his lost desire, the comrade he himself had killed, the love he had himself relinquished—such hours had beaten the poor savage as with heavy clubs.

Slowly much that was fine and sensitive had been flogged out of his spirit; what was left was a dull-eyed, shaggy beast. He sat so—like a tired gorilla, squatting on his haunches, one long hand trailing across the floor, the other clutching a big bone from which he tore the meat with his teeth. And as he ate he stared at the fire, his eyes reddened by the smoke of winter days and nights. His hair had grown matted and long; he had forgotten his cleanliness; the cabin was sour and littered. It was the cave of a wolf.

Slow, rising waves of realization flooded across the woman's brain. She hung there at his window sill, ice-cold, sick as the victim of delirium is sick, as the haunted man in the ghost story sickens at the coming of apparition, as the madman is sick when, in slowly returning sanity, he is beckoned to by the images of his madness. Rosamund knew then that all the winter she had been mad. She knew that it was the triumphant climax of her madness, this act that had brought her to the valley.

Until that instant she had been beside herself, in the horrid, vivid phrase; in other far less potent words, a divided self, a soul that walked helpless by its own side, a personality disjointed by some nervous compulsion, some deep-rooted, ungratified desire. Desire! That was the face of her beast: desire, the longing of the beast woman for the rude domination of the beast man, physical, a thing of the body merely, degrading, a brutal, century-stified, wisdom-softened urge.

She had summoned it, she had indulged it, she had tempted it, she had blinded her spirit to its meaning, she had become more of a beast than

Brand. For so George had warned her: "If the civilized man or woman deliberately summons him, he comes like a tiger, in tenfold devilry—beasts with a vengeance, for they've learned how to be bestial consciously, with skill."

Rosamund knew that, as Mathew had been a lost man, so was she now a lost woman, a lost soul. The way back and up along the centuries was closed. She stood condemned in a darkness where there could not be a God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Perhaps Rosamund's preparations and her secret departure had caused a slight disturbance in the nerves of her sleeping nurse, for Miss Lay woke before sunrise and had a strong impulse to go in and look at her patient. She put on her kimono, got her feet into slippers, and tiptoed to the door of Rosamund's bedroom. It was wanly lighted. The nurse saw the disturbed drawer and closets, the empty bed. In an instant her hands were on the folded letters.

The coolness of her training came promptly to the woman's aid. She sat down for a few minutes and thought over the situation in all its possible bearings. Then, before rousing her friend in the other room, she went to the telephone and got the number of Ferguson's city house. Patiently she kept at the ringing of the silent household until central's sleepy, obstinate "Sorry, they don't answer" was cut by a sharp, anxious voice.

"Hello. Miss Lay? Yes, this is George Ferguson. What's wrong?"

Miss Lay, in her composed, slightly illiterate tones, read out to him the contents of her letter and then, at his request, the contents of the one addressed by Rosamund to him. There was a humming, distressful silence over the wires and then George spoke again, harshly. For an instant Miss Lay

thought that was another speaker. This voice was savage and blurred.

"Give Miss Raeburn some plausible explanation. Repeat the same explanation to Doctor Nichols. Don't let any one else know. Better say that her cousin in Vermont sent for her urgently. I'll fix it so there will be no questions. Meanwhile, don't worry. It's all right. I understand why she's gone and where. She'll be back—soon. I am going to get her."

There was an added phrase, but Miss Lay thought it was not addressed to her. He had said it through his teeth as he hung up. It sounded like: "God save her from me!" But, she supposed that was hardly the correct interpretation. Mr. Ferguson was such a "perfect gentleman." She could not see the reality of what she had dimly, but quite correctly, heard.

George, in his bedroom, went about his business with a white-hot certainty and speed. If Rosamund, getting ready for her flight, had been a supple wild-cat, George was a panther. There was no pause, no hesitation, as he flung his lithe, strong body about in rapid preparation. He left a message for his mother, another one for his secretary, a third for Nichols.

He called a taxi and before the light was strong he had boarded a Western train, only seven hours behind the car that carried Rosamund. He sat forward in his seat, his eyes blood-shot, his fingers at wicked working in his pockets. He kept his face turned from his fellow beings, for he knew that it was not a good face for them to see. His expression, however, carried him rapidly where he wanted to go. It frightened and mastered and controlled. There was nothing in it of George's friendly wit and quick, responsive sympathy. It was the look of a tiger on his kill, hungry, snarling. No beast that Rosamund had conjured, even her own, had been so terribly a beast as George was now.

Two days later, but only a few hours after her departure from the little town, George came to Timber and hired the services of her very guide, not from her trail. George made no explanations beyond the bald fact that he wanted to overtake the lady. But at first there was a queer unwillingness on the part of that guide to serve him. George tried to control the wicked light in his eyes, but his soul was in white-hot flames and they broke through. However, an exorbitant price bought him his man, and the reluctant youth, who had led Rosamund at sunrise, started up ahead of George before the same sun had set.

George had no eyes for beauty; the blood pounded in his brain and made red blurrings across his vision. He sat his saddle with a viselike grip, unconscious of any bodily sensations.

They climbed very fast, hardly stopping to breathe the little trailwise ponies, and, at sight of the red rock, ruby with afterglow, George pulled in his rein.

"Wait here with your ponies until I come," he said. "And wait until noon to-morrow even if it rains ice, savvy?" He had got out of his saddle and had come close to the boy's stirrup to say this, laying a hand on the other's bridle and staring up into his eyes. "After that, if I don't come, get back to Timber, and keep your mouth shut."

"Yes, sir," the lad stammered, and turned white. He felt at the same time a little sick.

George left him. Across the abrupt, steep place where the stream divided stood his signal post, pointing out with its blood-red finger Rosamund's way back to the primitive. She had very vividly described the dog-faced rock. George had no doubts. He tore his way down the sliding bank below the trail into the thickening shadows and writhed through the confused timber like a snake. He knew the jungles of Africa, of India, of the Northwest. He was

trained to follow more perilous trails than hers—Rosamund's, the flying, tawny quarry with her storm-blown hair.

Before Rosamund could have distinguished it his hunter's ear caught the sighing tumble of the falls. He had crossed this branch of the stream early in his passage down the cañon and so approached the valley more rapidly, from a slightly different angle and from a higher elevation, than she had, coming to the edge of the valley at a point not many yards distant from the rawhide rope. It was late, the last part of his journey had been made half by instinct, half by strained vision through the increasing dimness. Now a waver of the young, setting moon caressed the frosty, spring night.

George stood above the red cliff, breathing rapidly from the ruthless speed of his journey, his body wet, his eyes searching that beautiful, walled desolation. They caught the whirling sparks of Brand's hidden chimney, hot and red in the blue light, and George swore below his breath.

He prowled about the edge of the cliff and found Brand's rope. By this uncertain light it was impossible to see far down the face of the cliff, which was blurred by shadows and plunged into a feathery darkness of firs. George started on his climb with set teeth. Before he let himself down over the edge his right hand sought and found the loaded pistol in his pocket.

If it had not been for exquisite poise, quick instinct and trained muscles, he would have plunged down here or there during the descent. For there were places where the rope twisted beyond his reach and he had to shift about jutting rocks to climb down to it again. When he came to the broken end, he could not see how much height there was yet between him and the ground. A thought of Rosamund speared his hesitation.

He climbed, came to an impasse, hung, and dropped. He landed on soft earth through a rush of branches with hardly a shock, and got springily to his feet. He remembered the direction of the whirling sparks and went unerringly along the border of the woods. There was no more emotion in him now than there is in the hunting cat, merely a watchfulness and a sort of eager caution. He came to the trail and heard Rosamund's voice.

It was a hurried voice, not so much pleading as racing with fear. He stole up upon it, step by step, his heart now in the ice of its disgust, and stood there in Brand's doorway, not six feet from the two people in the hut. But they, believing in their impregnable isolation, heard him no more than they heard the motions of the inhuman wind. They were strained together before the red fan of the fire, Brand's arms devouring her struggling slenderness. She had her head twisted back so far that her despairing eyes met his. George had never seen a woman's face so gray; even the lovely lips he had kissed were ashen. The bearded savage laughed and babbled against her murmured prayers.

"And if I hadn't 'a' heard you creepin' away, don't you s'pose I'd of cotched you afore you could leave a second time? Don't you know why you fought agin' me when I pulled you back in here? Don't you know why you was scared to come to me, and yet you couldn't help comin'? Oh, I understand you now, I've hed time to think you out. You heard me callin' across the miles for you, day after day and night after night, callin' from my prison to your heart. Woman, woman, I thought you was a goddess, but now I know you're just my woman. You come back for me. Not to fetch me away out of this valley, but to live with me here. I might 'a' knowed you would come back. What can you get anywheres better than what I give you

here? Food and shelter and lovin'. Don't fight me, Rose. That makes me mad. Kiss me onct, onct, onct—then you'll know what you come back for. Then you'll know!"

He set one great hand back of her straining head and forced it forward on its slim neck, bending it like the stem of a sapling, while her captive body and her gray face winced and writhed and her eyes fought his. She dared not look away; her last hold on the plunging beast was in that desperate look.

George took two steps forward, pulled his gun, and spoke.

"Beast!" he said, cool, sharp, and clear.

Brand crouched and wheeled. Rosamund saw George against the night, made a half cry, a half step, and faced the small blue hole of his weapon. She ran back to the crouching, shaking victim of her summons and spread out her hands.

"Don't shoot him, George!"

George laughed, an uncanny sound in this valley of dumb savagery.

"Oh, yes, I forgot, you don't like me to save my hand." He took the pistol by its muzzle and flung it away back of him among the trees; then, as Brand, growling, lifted himself for a savage leap, George sprang.

Rosamund went back and back until the log wall stopped her, and there she stood, painted by dancing firelight, in her torn riding habit, her hair streaming sideways across her brow and shoulder, her eyes blank with horror. George was no longer George; his face had changed, as if, from somewhere back of its fine contours, a blurred countenance had pushed itself forward. This face snarled, sharp, lean, its eyes were cruel as a leopard's, they watched through slits or glared wide. Brand's massive, iron strength, she thought, would crush the life out of his catlike slenderness; Brand's terrible hands would tear him, light limb from limb.

They swayed to and fro, charged, tore, struck. Brand bit George's shoulder. She saw him rip himself away; saw the blood pour down his torn shirt. Brand's fingers were wrapped round the artist's lean, dark, close-cut head, twisting it cruelly. Rosamund did not know that she screamed, nor did the men glance at her. They had forgotten their quarry, their fight was to the death, a jungle fight, a forest fight, a fight of male beasts. George was forced back, dodged the wall, and stepped out of the door.

The fight went down the trail and Rosamund followed it, staggering from tree to tree, her eyes swallowing the moonlight and the straining shapes. George was bent almost to the ground, forcing himself about and up like a steel rod, his fist getting in its shrewdly calculated blows. Brand groaned and cursed, but George fought in silence, blood on his face, on his body. Rosamund saw that he twisted back Brand's arm, but Brand's other hand was still clawing his face.

They fought across the ground and crashed against brush and fell, more than ever brutal and indistinguishable. She smelled the dust of their struggle above the sweet, keen smells of the spring night. The moon struck out white pictures of a distorted face, a twisted limb, straining muscles. They were half naked, and George's body glistened like marble. She remembered her brief sight of it in the studio, safe and clean, lunging beautifully, his eyes agleam with pleasure. She projected to his present aid all her prayer and her will. "God help him! God save him! God, don't punish him for what I have done!"

Brand's hands clutched and tore at the rippling muscles of his shoulder like iron hooks. And Brand was climbing over him like a bear. How could there be hope or help for any civilized being against that savage force! Rosamund

forced herself to turn, and began to grope for George's gun. She had watched its flight. She listened for the struggle while she hunted, heard it move on down the trail, and that gave her a momentary hope. George must somehow have thrown aside Brand's weight, for the men seemed again on their feet.

As her eyes caught the gleam of the metal and her fingers snatched at its polished weight, a cry tore through her body. It was more a scream than a cry—George's voice, in the first sound he had made. After it, as she ran, came the thud of a heavy fall, a ghastly sort of choking, bubbling sound; as she came to the bank of the stream this fell silent. Down there lay a dark mass, half in, half out of the running water. She wavered toward it, first on foot, then, from weakness, on her knees.

Brand lay on his back, his head deep in the water, on the surface of which there began to spread an oily darkness. George was crouched almost on top of him, his face hidden, moaning against the body of his kill.

When Rosamund touched his bare, wet shoulder he cried out, flung her arm away, half rose to his feet, staggered up the bank, where he dropped, as if all his bones were broken; huddled close to the earth. Rosamund turned him over with quivering gentleness. Brand's claws had found his face; ripped it mercilessly. She conquered her sickness, brought water, bathed the ghastly wounds, bandaged one eye above which was a deep cut, and, taking advantage of his unconsciousness, foot by foot she dragged his dead weight back to the cabin and got him, somehow, on Brand's bed, where she had slept.

CHAPTER XIX.

Through agony, delirium, and brief periods of exhausted stupor, which may have been sleep, George struggled for what remnant of life the beast had left

in his mauled body. And Rosamund, with the face of Magdalene, did for him all that she could find to do. While he was in the worst pain he would crush her hands in his; but as soon as the briefest alleviation freed his consciousness he would throw her from him as if there were pollution in her touch. And for this she had neither resentment nor a thought of protest, hardly even sensitiveness.

Her pride, the beautiful arrogance that had held up her long neck and round chin and had ridden in her eyes, was down and dead, her self-respect hung all in rags about her soul. She called herself lost, and knew that she was guilty of death and of the ruin of this exquisitely gifted being who lay, disfigured and agonized, before her. She gave herself no extenuation: she had killed, worse than killed, from wanton madness.

During George's fits of stupor she went down to the river, dragged Brand's body to the bank where, day by day, using his ax and her hands, she scraped out a shallow grave for him. It had to be very close to the stream and it was only with vast horror and labor that she could get his long, stiff body disposed decently within it. She covered him with earth and tried to pray over him, but this ended in horrible, gasping tears and faintness. Who was she to pray for him or, indeed, for any man?

Dully, afterward, she went back to her work and her care. It was difficult to live at all in the valley. The season was too early for berries; there was, to her knowledge, only one edible green, of which she made a stewed, not very appetizing, vegetable; for the rest, she tried her skill at trapping, fishing, and shooting of arrows, and managed to kill enough to keep life in her body. For George she made broth and forced him to drink it in sips, although he tried to turn away his tortured head.

The battle with pain and shock and fever went on for interminable days and nights. Rosamund watched it from her place beside him on the floor and watched, too, his increasing weakness, the feeble pulse, and shallow breath, until she became gradually aware of the nearing steps of death. Very lonely was his coming through the empty valley which, she told herself, she would never leave again. She sat, her head bent, hands loosely clasped, staring and waiting, tearless, calm, sometimes for hours. And it was at one of these vigils, a sunny morning out there, a ghostly May morning, musical and bright, that she was wondering how long it would take her to die after she had buried her man.

"Rosamund," George whispered.

She looked at him. He had not spoken one intelligible word since she had dragged him to her bed. She found scant courage now to meet his conscious gaze—one eye was still bandaged, the other sunk deep and shadowed, its brilliance lost. She crept closer and laid her head down near his feet.

"I am not—going to—die," he said faintly, and smiled a fine, grim little smile which crossed his ruined face with an uncanny effectiveness. His right hand began to grope; she drew herself up toward it, and it touched her hair. It rested there and George sighed deeply, turned his face to her, and slept.

He drew strength back to himself in this fashion, desperate bit by bit, and as he grew stronger he became a Sphinx to her hopeless timidity. He accepted her unwearying service, for if Brand had turned from master to slave, this man had turned more ruthlessly from lover to lord of all her being. As soon as she dared Rosamund spoke; this on a night when he lay broad awake, the stronger brightness of his visible eye brooding mysteriously upon her.

"George, when we go back—I shall not, of course, expect you to marry me."

His mouth ran up in its hard, new smile.

"Really!" he mocked. "Have you anything to say as to that? You belong to me, my girl, as no other modern woman can belong to any man. I've bought you with half my eyesight and most of my soul." The eye smoldered and a faint stain crept across his hard, hollow face. "I can use you as I will, and, if I will, I can leave you, so used, here with your dead men. I can climb back alone." And he dropped the eyelid.

The dread cruelty of this speech went on into the silence repeating its even, merciless cadence again and again and again until the hundredth time, a horror to Rosamund's memory. She crouched with it before the fire and shivered all night long.

"I might have left *you*," she faltered suddenly, in the morning, when she had fed him, her speech warm with unshed tears.

He laughed at this. Later he left his bed with her help and managed to get into the chair. All day he lay back in it, broken with weakness, and slept most of the time, his face relaxed to a delicate sort of boyishness, from which cruelty and passion were purged, so that she yearned to it and loved it. She knew now that she had never loved before.

The dependence of this man, the cruelty of him, the pathos of him, her guilt toward him, the magnificent swiftness and courage of his rescue of her, that very flapping up in him of an incredible ferocity and strength—all these had gripped the very roots of her nature. The mother was roused, the mate satisfied, the slavish instinct ruled, the rebel mastered, and the civilized woman overwhelmed forever in remorse and shame and worship.

She came to think that it did not matter what happened to her, what ultimate or immediate punishment, if she could

send back to his world this strong and gifted man, this magnificent, trained beast in whom a soul had flowered to beauty. Was he not the best of Brand made perfect, the wistful longings of Brand fulfilled? The patient centuries had made him of just such clay—a mysterious hand at work through generations.

In this mood she confessed herself to him, beginning to talk quite naturally and simply when he lay out in the sun under the firs, his first adventure; she beside him, at a pathetic distance from her lord.

"It was not only my fault," she said, "it was partly because no one had ever taken the trouble to know me, or, perhaps, no one had ever had the courage to find me out. I must often have betrayed myself, as children will, but they don't face such betrayals, these mothers and these nurses and these teachers. I was, of course, a pretty innocent child, and the savage in me was simply overlooked or thrust back or explained away. I remember now all sorts of little things: terrible fits of rage and crying, terrible agonies of love for pets and toys and people, almost indecent tenderesses, which, I can now see, shocked any one who watched them. I don't think I was abnormal; I think I was probably more vigorously normal than some people, because I was always very healthy and full of life.

"Perhaps they guessed that there were dangerous energies in me, because they kept at me so; I was so relentlessly educated—an avalanche of acquirements. I must speak languages and dance and sew and play instruments and acquire social poise and develop a social conscience. And all the while, because my parents were dead and I had no brothers and sisters, there was no outlet provided for my emotions. And it is only on the emotional side that I am rich, gifted. Oh, I know what incredible nightmare it's carried me to, this

gift, but I am sure, for all that, it might have been—of use. I can love, George, I can love—and love. If I had only been able to know my beast, to recognize him and to understand him, I'd have harnessed him to some good service for the world—for you." Her voice broke and she sat there before him, struggling against her tears.

He waited with unchanged face, his head tilted back against the trunk of the tree, his hand lying long and still in the deep-furred bear skin that was thrown over his body.

Rosamund went on:

"When I tried to grasp life closely, brutally, it always slipped away, as you used to do, George, into reserve and indignation. You, too. Yes, for you told me to drive away my beast. He wasn't bad *then*, that beast. He was a poor, hungry thing—naturally, your slave. But you didn't like him. I was a great lady—and, and—— But who could possibly understand—or forgive—me?"

"Any man *ought* to understand and forgive you, Rosamund," George said slowly, his eyes on the red cliff, "but no man will. I can't. My soul is half blind"—he touched his bandaged eye—"my own sins are comprehensible, forgivable—not yours."

"Ah!" she sighed. "That's the whole bitter, unjust burden upon women. You damn us and give yourselves salvation." She was silent, drooping. Then she drew up her head. "Well, I won't ask understanding or forgiveness. After all, until I saw Brand there, crouching on his hearth, unconscious of my return, I didn't understand myself. And when he caught me as I was trying to steal away from him back to you, to my life, to my sanity, my own beast betrayed me. It fled. Civilization had done a dreadful thing. It had bled my beast. He was a ghost, George, a dreadful, bloodless ghost. He could prowl and haunt and come close, but when I

laid hands on him, he was cold mist. I don't forgive him, or myself, or the world—or you. There will never be any forgiveness between us, for what little time we have left."

"What will there be between us, for the time we have left?" he asked softly.

She made no reply, only spread out her submissive hands and bent her head. It was as if she had spoken the words, "I am yours." But his eyes left her and fell. There was nothing more said between them.

As George's strength increased he undertook the trapping, fishing, and shooting, and their larder was instantly well provided with game. He ate determinedly against his appetite, with the evident purpose of making new blood and vigor. It was not long before his elastic strength came back, but the sight of the eye that had received the deep cut was gone, he thought, forever, and all the light of his face had been quenched. The sweet and witty smile of lips and eyes, the quick, fine radiance of him, had been beaten out. Rosamund mourned her lost lover even as she worshipped her grim lord.

There came a daybreak when he called her, and she started from her dreams to find him dressed, his eye for the first time unbandaged, his face inscrutably set, the cabin full of cold light.

"Start the fire," he told her, "and cook something for me. I'll be back presently."

She obeyed his commands under such pressure of dread that her very blood ran slow. She felt that this was the last day, perhaps the last hour of her life. The executioner chopped away her minutes, blow by heavy blow. George would leave her and first—what punishment might he inflict, with that terrible new hardness that sat upon his lips and forehead? His face had grown so merciless; it was savage without the emotional instability of the savage, not

a Brand to be frightened or cajoled, the face perhaps of some barbarous priest, whose soul was flint for sacrifice. He had become for her unapproachable, mysterious, as the essential man is forever mysterious to the essential woman. There is no compunction, no mercy in such a stone face, in such a stone heart as man's has been and may forever be.

He came back from an inspection of the cliff and took his breakfast from her hands. She could not eat and that seemed a matter of indifference to him, for he did not urge her, hardly looked to see whether she ate or not. And when he was through he strode out of the cabin. She hesitated, heard his steps grow fainter, and ran out, her hand pressed to her heart. At sight of her, he turned abruptly as though her appearance had reminded him of something he had forgotten.

He went back past her and she saw him rake out the fire from its hearth and scatter its burning logs across the floor. Then he came out again and stood a few feet from her, staring back at the low building. Presently its grass rug, the work of Brand's lonely patience, began to smoke and smolder, the interior danced with little flames. When it was well caught, beyond the power of a deserted woman to save for her shelter, George turned on his heel, walked past her, and away. Again she hesitated and again she followed him, breathless with the anguish of suspense.

So, he a yard ahead and never looking back, they went through the dew along the bright river edge, past the pool under the fir trees to the base of the cliff. Without a glance at her, George lifted his right hand, caught at a rock, and set his foot to climb. She looked up once and knew that she could never make that upward climb alone. She clamped her pride and her despair down on her heart, and looked back across the valley, a bowl of blossoms and young green, flushed with sunrise, stirred by

free birds, the soft wind blew in her face. So had Brand stood, but with winter and sunset to blow and glare upon him; so must she stand and endure desertion and an end, "alone with her dead men," as George had foretold her doom.

"Good-by," she said under her breath, and moved a sure, proud step away from him.

She felt rather than saw his hand shoot down and out for hers. When she forced her eyes to it it looked very strong and lean. He did not smile; there was no welcome in his face. She looked up to him once, let her fingers melt into his, and followed, with the eyes of a child.

The first part of their way was difficult and very dangerous, for that was the character of the red wall which, at its base, caved in so that a climber had to bend himself out and over, at a height perilous to his bones. For a man alone the thing was bad enough, but to drag a woman of less stature and strength over the obstacle was a double temptation to disaster.

George left her clinging to the wall and made the desperate turn alone. Then, bidding her not to move a finger, he went up and on, foot by foot, until he reached the end of the broken rope. Biting with his teeth, he deliberately chewed off a yard or two of the tough, dry, twisted hide and came down to the point above her. He lowered to her the severed piece, which she tied around her body, handing up the loose end to him.

They rested so, panting. Then they went on. It was slow, nerve-racking work; the height seemed greater than it was, because of that overhanging plunge of the cliff, because of the nearby, close speed of the waterfall. When they had crawled to the height above the falls, where the cliff on either side stood up to form the gateway through which the river plunged, they found themselves on the ledge where she and

Brand had rested and where she had heard him breathing brokenly in his grief.

She leaned back against the rocks, her hands hanging, and looked out across the world. The rising sun found her eyes, her face, her neck. Her hair gleamed gold. All that had been stirred and wakened, tormented and released, rose up in those eyes of hers and along her lips. It was a strong, thinned face, haunted and prophetic; all the thousand years of history, of war and cruelty and superstition, lived in it, and in it, too, was the promise of peace and of some greater thing than peace.

It looked ahead into the sunrise with the secret eyes of an animal, the candid eyes of a child; with the loyal eyes of a wife, with the tender eyes of a mother. It had the high presence of a goddess and the melting, ultimate softness of the beloved woman. It was all humanity, pathos, and rapture. It was death and birth and life. The beautiful hands hung and were worn and warm with service; in the light her rags were turned to gold. Beggar and queen, she was; slave and empress.

George moved a step and dropped there beside her to his knees. He wrapped his arms about her body and lifted up to the beauty of her face his own marred countenance. It was softened to the likeness of the man she knew and thought she understood. In his eyes, blind no longer, was a new light of understanding.

"Rosa Mundi, rose of the world," he said brokenly, "why do we go down to the beast to win you and climb up to the sun to hold you? Why do we give our sight for you, and for you throw away our souls? And still, in the end, fall down before you? Rose of the world, answer me—and let me kiss your feet."

She made no answer. Only her eyes filled slowly and the tears ran down her face.



The Man Who Would Not Wait

By Beatrice Ravenel

Author of "Madame De Lisle Gives Herself Away,"
"Adrian's Christmas Spirit," etc.

I AM almost sure that she must have made a will," said Madeleine slowly. The faint line of worry that he hated to see came between her eyes. Felix Warde looked away from her, into the masses of cone-shaped, white hydrangeas that lined the curve of the avenue. Through his brain went the subconscious reminder to have them thinned. The old lady liked to see the approach of visitors. Outside, as in the house, she wanted things to remain just as they had always been. Every tree and leaf grew under protest. Then he remembered that the old lady would never watch on this flower-hung veranda again.

"If she did not——" he began. A muscle worked in his cheek. He tapped the stone pillar beside him restively with his whip. He had just come from his invariable morning ride around the estate, and Black Care, as usual, had ridden behind.

"Why, then, of course everything goes to us," Madeleine finished his thought. "But I shouldn't let myself count on it too confidently, Felix." Her tone had the same soothing, reassuring quality that had for years ministered to the demands of Aunt Felicia's egotism. It was eloquent of a human soul trained to subservience. When his conscience had reproached him with his own attitude of waiting for, almost wishing the old woman's death, he had remembered that tone and acquitted himself. More

than for himself he had desired freedom for Madeleine, and the power of taking care of her and giving her everything that a woman ought to have. And now she was using that tone with him. His suspense must be getting into his manner. He'd have to pull himself together.

"You mean—Griffon?" he asked.

"Well, yes. Of course he is only a distant cousin, while we are her niece and nephew, but he saw so much of her, she was so—so taken up with his ideas. She talked to him for hours, the day before she sent for Mr. Langham. I know he brought some papers for her to sign. One of them may have been a will. She never would make one before, you know. She had the horror of providing for her own death that some old people seem to have. But she may have drawn one up then," added Madeleine, "and given it to Mr. Langham to keep for her."

"I wired him at once. He answered from San Francisco that he was returning almost immediately, but didn't seem to be sure of the day. Well, there's nothing to do but wait. Tell me about his visit again," he said abruptly.

"There were two visits. Both times he brought that young Mr. Terle who is in his office and both times Aunt Felicia sent me out on an errand. Generally she gets me to act as a witness. The visits were three days apart. Auntie was grumpy and hard to please.

She kept me at automatic writing—that always entertained her—but we couldn't get any good results. A few sentences came up over and over. One was 'blood is thicker than water.'"

"Don't you see how that happened?" demanded Felix impatiently. He disliked what seemed to him the childish and unstable psychic experiments that had whiled away old Miss Warde's heavy hours. "She was thinking of her duty to us. After taking the best years of our lives, as she has done, it would have been—infamous if she had cut us off."

"Oh, she must have left us something," Madeleine consoled. "And, anyway, we can get along somehow. Mrs. Hight wants me to stay with her as long as ever I like. She says Essie has never taken such a fancy to anybody. There's an opening for me already."

Felix uttered a short laugh. Mrs. Hight was their nearest neighbor, the wife of the doctor. She had taken Madeleine home with her after the funeral for the frankly expressed reason that it was not proper for a girl to remain in the house with a bachelor, even if he was her cousin and even if the housekeeper was a monument of respectability. Nothing would suit Mrs. Hight better than to secure the angelic, long-suffering disposition of Madeleine for her difficult and backward little girl, who usually changed governesses with her spring and autumn outfits.

"Yes," he answered dryly, "and I suppose that I could get another job like this, a sort of gentleman manager and overseer on another gentleman's estate. Pleasant prospect! But if Aunt Felicia made a will she didn't give it to anybody to keep. She kept it where she could put her hand on it. It's somewhere in the house."

"I think so, too," said the girl. A silence fell on the topic which they had tacitly refrained from discussing—the growing eccentricity which would have

landed Miss Warde in the category of the "queer" had she been the pensioner of some charity, instead of a person of great wealth and secure position. One of her foibles had been the hoarding of every scrap that involved her own personality, every letter, every dress. There were closets crammed with valueless papers.

Madeleine's glance swept the wide-flung veranda, the rolling slope that frothed into gardens below them and broke into woods far beyond the tree-dotted meadows.

"What I should hate most would be for you to lose this place, Felix," she said gently. "It ought to go with the name—Warde Hall. And you've put so much of yourself into it. It would be like leaving part of yourself behind, wouldn't it?"

He nodded silently. It would. The sense of overpowering loss that her words conjured up swept him into the impulse to make sure at least of something precious that might be his own. He had an irresistible craving for comfort, for security. He came close to the slight figure whose dull, black draperies made its delicate, golden beauty more fine and appealing, put an edge on it that went straight to his heart.

"What I should hate most would be—not to be able to take care of you as I want to," he said. Although they had known each other so intimately, a note of hesitancy came into his voice. He was finding it difficult to tell her of his love. "You've known for a long time, dear, haven't you, that you are the only woman in the world for me? You understand why I couldn't speak before. It might have ruined your prospects with her altogether, feeling as she did about cousins marrying." The memory that it would have ruined *his* prospects equally checked him for a second. It struck him that this was no way for a lover to urge his suit. His hands went out and clasped hers. "I do love you,"

he said, with genuine fervor. "I love you so much that I can't bear to think of more drudgery for you. All the time that I have been making this place more beautiful and valuable I've been seeing you the mistress of it. You do care for me, don't you, Madeleine?" He drew her into his arms and at her touch his yearning, that had been more than half loneliness, broke into passionate need of her. "Darling," he muttered. "Darling!"

"We needn't lose each other, anyway," she said softly, after a moment. "I've always cared, Felix. You must have known it. Well, you were very unconceited if you haven't."

The burden that had lain on him like a premonition of evil lifted. Nothing mattered much but Madeleine's cheek on his, Madeleine's surrender. The hydrangeas sent waves, smelling of honey, over them. The tall trees nodded approval. They were still young and they loved each other.

A sound caused them to spring apart. The shrub at the curve of the drive was shaken. Then a tall, emaciated figure came slowly into view, stumbling slightly. It would have been just like Griffon to have ducked back, after seeing them embrace and then make a second stage entrance.

"The vultures are gathering," murmured Felix. He felt Madeleine's repulsion. They were both afraid of Griffon; he, more than any one, represented the enemy. As he removed his hat, exposing his slanting, bald forehead with its gray skin, he was not a little like a well-groomed, domesticated, but still recognizable bird of prey.

"Well, this is very sad, very sad," he began, fussily settling Madeleine in a chair. One of the things Felix disliked about him was his way of playing host in other people's houses. Or, did he feel that this might already be his house? "One feels it more in contrast with this lovely day. One might imag-

ine that our dear friend was still with us"—he indicated the substantial ghost of Miss Warde, possibly floating about two and a half feet from the ground—"blessing us with her presence."

"I do feel that sometimes," said Madeleine eagerly.

Griffon lifted his claw as if to touch the girl's arm, but at the last moment refrained; another of his mannerisms.

"May I ask," he said, as if it were the most ordinary query, "whether you have received any message, any indication yet from our dear old friend?"

Madeleine answered as naturally.

"Not yet, but I should not be surprised if I did at any moment." The irritation Felix felt sent him off, around the corner of the house. He wished that Madeleine would keep these fancies to herself. Griffon had succeeded in striking with her that note of sympathy, of grave sentiment, that all women seemed to like and that had captivated old Miss Warde to heaven knows what point. For the first time the realization came to him that Griffon could be fascinating, and that he was bent on fascinating Madeleine. Perhaps he loved her. Remembering that covetous touch that had not quite lighted, Felix was sure that he did.

He had fascinated old Aunt Felicia. Though, where her own comfort was concerned, she could be a slave driver, she could also be lavish. Her subscriptions to standard charities were handsome enough, but to certain more or less freakish objects that had taken her fancy she had behaved like a sultana in a fairy tale. And to Griffon's object she had seemed more than hospitable. Felix smiled grimly as he remembered how they had rejoiced when Griffon's inexhaustible conversation had filled long evenings and left Madeleine and himself free. Griffon had traveled in the East; some of his investigations had been most secular, but they had been inspired by the purest and most earnest

purpose. When you struck that purpose you struck a fanatic. His hands trembled, he hissed through his teeth. It was the war against narcotics.

He had trailed the poppy through the Orient. He had gruesome stories concerning its devastations. At the tips of his clutching fingers were endless statistics. He knew of deep-laid plots to corrupt this country. Had not the devilish stuff been smuggled into schools, among innocent children? And the usual channels for suppressing the evil were far from adequate. Griffon had plans of his own for an immense propaganda that would really strike at the root. But it would take money—money.

Felix strolled back. And suddenly, as he caught Griffon's eye, it came to him that he, too, was being watched. Griffon was suffering from a nervous tension comparable to his own. What was he expecting? What had he reason to expect?

From the edge of the veranda Felix could see the gentle hill on whose other slope roamed the blue-blooded aristocrats who went to take blue ribbons at cattle shows. He had improved the stock until the Warde Hall exhibits were becoming famous. And nearer the house was the orchard of dwarf pear trees that he had planted. By every law of nature and justice the place was his, as a picture belongs more to the man who paints, than to the man who buys it. A fierce passion for the place rose in him under the challenge of the other man's presence. He walked away to the stables. He wanted to be among superior animals.

It was about half an hour later that he came suddenly upon Griffon again; in fact, he may be said to have caught him. Another man might have shown embarrassment, but Griffon straightened himself from the window into which he had been peering, removed his neat feet from the flower bed, and observed:

"I felt as if I could almost see our dear friend in her accustomed place." The window looked into Miss Warde's sitting room, where she had spent most of her days. Then he added, in a different tone: "Miss Hartwell has returned to Mrs. Hight's, she asked me to tell you. I lingered to have a few words with you, Warde. Where shall we be undisturbed? In there?"

"Anywhere," answered Felix bluntly. "As my aunt's room is full of her papers and private effects, I have locked it until her solicitor, Mr. Langham, arrives. I prefer to go over them with him."

"Ah, yes, very prudent, very prudent. Though you and Miss Hartwell are, I believe, what you would call the heirs presumptive, are you not?"

"Will you come into the library?" Felix cut him short.

Instead, Griffon walked to the seat of Italian marble, shaded by the enormous beech tree that stood in the middle of the lawn. Short of an atoll, nothing could have been so safe from eavesdroppers. Facing Felix, he asked abruptly:

"Have you any idea how the property has been left?"

The brutality of the inquiry startled the other for an instant. Then he realized that Griffon, with his uncanny finesse, had approached him in the only possible way. Suavity would have got him nowhere. It was man to man, an attitude that Felix could meet.

Griffon answered his own question.

"No, you haven't. Neither have I. We can both guess, but with a woman of our dear friend's—er—sensitively poised temperament, no one can be sure. I don't mind telling you that I had Miss Warde's definite promise that the bulk of her property should be left to the admirable object with which I have identified my career, to"—he restrained himself by an effort, as though the mention of the object would carry him away

at a tangent—"you know. And yet I am entirely aware that the matter remains—a gamble."

"You realize," said Felix harshly, "that what you tactfully call her temperament might be considered sufficient grounds for breaking her will. The question of undue influence might also come in. Courts of law are generally in favor of the blood relations."

"I have taken all that into account. It would be very unpleasant for you to bring such a suit, especially as Miss Hartwell, the coheirress, would probably decline to testify, except to her aunt's perfect sanity."

Felix was silent. Madeleine would do just that.

"On the other hand," continued Griffon, "the situation being, as I said, a gamble, both of us being in a position to win or lose it all, I suggest—a compromise." His body suddenly twitched, giving the lie to the businesslike manner that he had all along maintained. His lids shut, then blinked open.

"You mean a bargain?"

"Precisely. If you get it, you give me a percentage. We can discuss details at our leisure. If I get it, I do the same by you. We both hedge."

Felix looked him in the eyes. He was so angry that he had to concentrate his will upon his two hands to keep them off the wretched creature. The worst of it was the man didn't know that he was being insulting.

"You go to hell—you and your infernal drugs!" said Felix.

A look of extraordinary malignancy crossed Griffon's face. The words he tried to say came in hissing breath between his teeth. His eyes dilated with fury. Felix caught the shaking hand that was raised to strike him, and tossed it aside contemptuously. Then he got up and strode away. So that was it. He had surprised the man's secret. Why hadn't he guessed it before? He remembered Griffon's curious alterna-

tion of moods, the dilated pupils of his eyes. It was as clear as day. Like many would-be reformers, he saw everywhere a danger because that danger was a temptation to him.

Well, he would have to look out for the fellow. That was all there was to it. Griffon would revenge himself by playing some ugly trick, if he could work it. His look of hatred had been almost maniacal.

One result of the interview was to focus Felix's mind upon the will. That night his anxiety drove him into doing what he had sworn to himself that he would not do. He would at least satisfy himself that the document was not in the house. He unlocked the door of the sitting room. That was the logical place to look for it. His aunt had lived in this room until the day of the sudden stroke that had ended her life. The adjoining bedroom she had never liked. Both rooms were on the ground floor, so that she could be wheeled directly out into the garden.

As he looked about him he knew that an exhaustive search might take days. The old woman had had the instincts of a jackdaw. The cupboards behind the carved paneling were crammed with papers. It would be better to find some short cut.

The obvious thing was to put himself in her place. He did so, physically as well as imaginatively. Her huge easy-chair stood between a window—the same one Griffon had peeped into—and a small table, which held a reading lamp. He lowered himself into the chair, his head fitting into the slight hollow in the head rest. Opposite was a bookcase filled with old leather volumes. If he were an old woman, where would he conceal a paper? In some obvious place, so that his failing memory might not forget it. Some place from which it might be brought out without too much rustling, without unusual movement, lest an officious attendant,

attracted by the sounds, should rush in, offering service.

He switched on the light. The backs of the books sprang forward. One fat, red volume was directly in line with the lamp. He recognized it as a book he had lingered over as a boy, a book on heraldry, with quaint figures of heraldic beasts, dragons, unicorns, griffins—griffins—Griffon! A will in Griffon's favor. Why, the gilt design on the back was a griffin rampant. Obvious, to help a failing memory.

Before he had the volume open he knew what he should find slipped between the leaves.

He read it at a gulp. Then he went back to the chair. He felt physically sick, as if from a blow in the stomach. Waves of nausea and disgust and fury flooded him. He read it again, deliberately, as if each clause were a separate instrument of torture which one half of his consciousness was applying to the other half.

After the formal, legal phraseology of the opening sentences came a list of moderate bequests to charities, pensioners, servants. To her nephew, Felix Carteret Warde, and her niece, Madeleine Warde Hartwell, fifteen thousand dollars each. George Augustus Griffon was residuary legatee.

He read it over and over. It was incredible. Why, there must be at least a couple of millions. Griffon! How had he managed it? By sheer, hypnotic charm? By working on the superstitious impulse of an unstable nature to buy its way into a possible hereafter, to "do some good" before passing on? Griffon! A couple of millions? Properly managed, the estate ought to amount to twice that.

He started as if at a sound, though there had been no sound, and glanced sharply at the window. Through an opening in the heavy, silk curtains, through the dark glass, something white was glimmering in. It vanished in-

stantly. Felix restrained himself from rushing after it. He thought with extraordinary quickness. He might destroy footprints. No, in the garden bed there were already footprints, left by Griffon that morning. He listened. There was no more noise than might be made by the light rustling of wind in the shrubs. Hush! Was that the sound of a stumble, coming from the drive? A hot wave went over Felix as he remembered his declaration to Griffon that he had locked this room up, would keep it locked until the lawyer's arrival. Well, let him go. If he knew Griffon, he would be back again, possibly tomorrow night, watching his chance. Like Felix, he had probably made up his mind that the will was in this room.

He had not determined what to do with the paper. But just as the talk with Griffon had egged him on to the search, so the apparition acted as a spur to decision. He must either make the will public or else destroy it. If he concealed it again, it might be found again, and, if the second concealment were traced to him, he would be ruined. Mr. Langham certainly knew of the existence of the will, but he could not know whether Miss Warde herself had destroyed it or not. He might suspect Felix, but he could never prove anything. He might even suspect Madeleine, who had had free access to all the old lady's personal possessions. No, thank Heaven, nobody could ever suspect Madeleine of anything—crooked.

Crooked!

It would be the kind of thing that was called a crime.

He put out the lamp and locked the room again carefully. He returned to the library, where he spent his evenings. It felt very lonely and unresponsive without Madeleine. Thinking methodically, he decided that he could safely light the logs that waited, ready laid, in the bronze-lined fireplace. The night

was growing chilly. He felt cold all through. It would not mean that he was going to burn the document; that was only one of the possibilities.

What was a crime, anyway? Society had worked out a system of machinery to protect itself and anybody who interfered with it was accused of sabotage. It was patent that the inflexible course of the law often caused real injustice, instead of preventing it. Why, take his own case: Warde Hall belonged to him and Madeleine. It was the one spot of earth that his heart called home, where he belonged. It was his earthly Paradise, where she was his predestined Eve. And all that lay between them and the coming true of their dream was an irrational paper.

It had never occurred to him that he could commit a crime. He had considered himself rather a sensitive type morally. He had suspected that his aunt had created his position for him because she wanted the protection of a man in the house, and it had been to salve his self-respect that he had put his very best brains into the place. And now the place had got him. He had half unconsciously looked forward to the time when he should take his place as one of the landowners, one of the men of position and influence of the neighborhood; when their manner to him would lose—or had his pride imagined it?—that off-handedness, or else that formal indifference that indicated that they hardly considered him one of themselves.

And Madeleine. She would not have to make her way. With the proper clothes and a little more self-confidence, she would take rank as a beauty. It was for Madeleine he wanted it most.

And now—only thirty thousand dollars between them. Just enough to keep them from starving, or else the new beginning of old work. And he had not trained himself for any such future. He was becoming just middle-aged

enough to dread new departures. He had trained himself for the life of a country gentleman, here at Warde Hall, with Madeleine as *chatelaine*.

It came to him as he sat staring into the fire, balancing the paper on his knee, that a man carries his destiny inside him. He does not have to make up his mind; his brain matter and blood corpuscles do it for him. To all intents and purposes, he had destroyed this document years ago, when he had taken the line of least resistance and accepted the old lady's offer. It was almost automatically, not much more than a ceremonial gesture, that he got up, just as the gray morning made winding sheets of the long windows, and poked the smoldering wood into a blaze. To have done otherwise would have been to have wrenched his nature hopelessly apart. He dug the paper into a grave of flame.

Business took Felix to town the next morning. It was necessary to decide whether the order of some expensive farming machinery should be countermanded or not. One of the difficulties of his position was that he must not seem to take too much responsibility upon himself; he must make the place mark time as much as possible, until its destination was certain. Felix found that he had developed, almost overnight, a keen sense of appearances. His nerves were nearer the surface than ever.

On his return the housekeeper informed him that Mr. Griffon had called and asked to spend the morning in the library, looking up some reference books. She had had Parrot take him in some refreshments. Felix nodded approval, but a thin blade of hate cut across his brain. The colossal impudence of the man. The cheek! Well, he would find nothing in the library. And if he repeated his nocturnal visit, Felix would be ready for him.

During the afternoon Felix rode over to the Hights'. He disliked the place;

he never saw it without mentally picking it to pieces and planting it all over again. He rather disliked Mrs. Hight, who was a human interrogation mark. But he found himself unable to be away from Madeleine any longer. If this apprehension, this unwillingness to be alone, was remorse—though he assured himself coldly that there was nothing to be remorseful about—the sight of Madeleine, the knowledge that he had secured her happiness, would lay the curse.

His first glance showed him that Madeleine needed comfort as much as he did. He had to hold himself from being too reassuring. The girl looked pinched and started feverishly at sounds. She admitted that she was sleeping badly.

"I know what's the matter," he accused her. "You don't really believe in that nonsense, do you?"

She flushed under his tender scorn.

"I don't exactly *believe*," she faltered, "but—oh, Felix, I feel that she is trying to tell me something. Last night I dreamed that I was told to find the will. And I woke up—and found myself hunting through the bureau. It was horrible."

"No wonder. You're tired out." He put his arms around her in a new impulse of protection and kissed the golden waves over her forehead again and again. "Just wait a while, and remember it's going to be all right; and when everything is settled I'll pick you up and carry you off to the Riviera. What you need is a sea voyage. And a kind husband," he added half teasingly.

He acknowledged to himself that he, too, for the first time, wanted to get away from Warde Hall. It was becoming haunted with disturbing associations. That was because Madeleine was no longer there, perhaps. He lingered over the good-by on the doctor's porch even more yearningly than is the custom of lovers. Now that he allowed it ex-

pression, his love for the girl was absorbing him more and more. It was taking the place of something else that he was vaguely conscious of having lost; it was becoming his real reason for living, his sum of the deepest values of life, his—self-respect, it might be.

He rode slowly through the moonlit avenue, bathing his heart in the thought of her as the trees bathed themselves in the silver radiance from the sky. She would make everything right. She would transform all the rough places and the sordidness into beauty, like this unearthly stuff that made the breath stop in his throat through its sheer loveliness.

He found a surprise waiting for him. Parrot informed him, with an air of importance, that there had been an accident down the road. Parrot was an ass, whose training had not been able to quench a human pleasure at getting into the foreground, the keynote of the existence of a proper servant being that he should remain in the background. He had helped the gentleman to bed himself. No, not hurt, just shaken like. His car had been run into, on the way from the station, by that young Mr. Robinson who drove so wild. The gentleman thought a night's rest would be quite sufficient, but for Heaven's sake not to disturb him again before morning.

The last appeal conjured up before Felix's imagination an endless chain composed of the housekeeper, the maids, and Parrot, all pressing their services and bringing tribute of stimulants and remedies. Had the gentleman given his name?

"Oh, yes, sir," said Parrot, in surprise. "Didn't I mention it? It's Mr. Langham, sir."

Felix's heart jumped. No, he would not go upstairs. It would look better to respect the old man's request. After all, the whole thing had happened advantageously. If the stealthy visitor

whom he was expecting arrived, he wanted a free hand. He was almost sure that Griffon believed himself unnoticed the night before; otherwise, he would hardly have come this morning. He was going to give him a lesson that he would remember.

It was not until some time after the household had settled down for the night that he unlocked and lighted the sitting room. This time, however, he partly opened the glazed door that led to the veranda. For about an hour he sat reading in full view of whomever might be watching from outside. Then he switched out the lamp, closed the veranda door, but without fastening it, and went into the hall, locking that door behind him very audibly.

From the hall he passed noiselessly into the bedroom where old Miss Warde had died. Through its connecting doorway he could look into the room that he had just left. The moonlight filtered into it through the branches of tall, flowering shrubs outside, nowhere brilliant, but making a suffused glow in which the carving of the precious old furniture bulked, dark and sinister. From the couch at the foot of the bed he lifted something which he kept in his hand. After a while he rested one knee on the couch. It seemed a long time that he waited. At last it came—the soft, careful footsteps on the stone pavement outside. Yes? Was that a stumble?

Like a snake, Felix slipped again into the sitting room.

Against the glass door a crouching silhouette showed itself. Then the door was pushed open, softly as a breath. The shadow undulated over the threshold.

Felix bounded forward. At the same instant the shadow lifted itself and, with long leaps, dashed for the black masses of shrubbery on the left. Felix fired, aiming well to the right of the galloping shape. He had no wish to hurt the

cowardly skulker, but he did want to give him the scare of his life. As he fired he laughed. Then the laugh was struck from his lips. The pistol dropped from his hand which went suddenly damp. His knees shook.

He dragged himself in the direction from which that sudden, stricken cry had come. There—from the right.

It wasn't Griffon. He had vanished like the thing of night that he was. What was it? Who—was it?

He found her lying under the massed, honey-sweet bushes that lined the drive, her black dress blotted into the shadow. To his frantic questions she answered nothing at all. He would never know how she came to be there. Perhaps she had wandered all that way in her sleep, some dream having forced her to rise and dress herself and seek. Perhaps the expected message from the dead had seemed to come, sending her to the spot where the dead had left her longest memories. Perhaps she had learned in some mysterious way of Griffon's stealthy watch and had come to warn her lover. He would never know. Did it matter? When he lifted her at last and carried her into the fatal room he felt that nothing in life would ever matter much again. It was finished.

Without knowing, he knew that he was surrounded by the household. Voices. Movement. The garage windows flashed out like square jewels. A motor went rushing away. Parrot, in a fantastic costume, was thrusting a glass of something at him. Mr. Langham was bending over the crumpled figure—so much smaller than Madeleine it looked—on the couch.

"Poor girl, poor girl," he said gently. He glanced sharply at Felix; and what he saw seemed to frighten him. He hurried on, as if safety lay in keeping up the conversation, in fighting against silence: "I had hoped to see you two young people enjoy this beautiful place together. Perhaps you do not know that

you are—were—your aunt's joint heirs. She executed her will during my last visit here, and I persuaded her to let me lock it in my safe. Her first one—the old man pursed his lips and shook his head—"I did not approve of at all, not at all. She thought better of it. And now, my poor fellow, I must console with you, instead of congratulating you on being the owner of Warde Hall." His voice rose in shocked remonstrance. "Hush, hush. Don't laugh. Warde!"

But Felix laughed. He put his face between his hands and shook with the inextinguishable laughter of the damned. This was what he had done! For he had done it all himself. All the while the place he loved had been his, the woman he loved had been his, his for a little patience, a little faith. And now—

Outside the moonlight drew its long lines of beauty across an empty world. Paradise—without Eve!



AMONG the newest novelties from France come some unusual flowers for the wintry months. They are made of sea shells and bits of tinted glass. The shells are used effectively in simulating apple, peach, and cherry blossoms, and artificial dahlias, in orange, yellow, and lavender, chrysanthemums, bleeding heart, and tiny sprigs of mimosa are made of glass, carefully modeled and beautifully colored.



THE interesting private collection of East Indian treasures belonging to Lockwood de Forest, artist and connoisseur, was recently sold in New York. In this varied collection were marvelous old Syro-Damascan chests of carved wood, inlaid with mother of pearl, carved bridal chests, panels, and doors, of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Sideboards, cabinets, bookcases of teakwood, as well as carved arches, casings, and ceilings of the same wood.

There were, also, Hindu domestic brasses, copper vessels, old temple lamp chains, the heavy links interspersed with figures of goddesses and elephants, and an extensive array of Oriental arms and armor.



MADEMOISELLE CECILE SOREL, the famous French actress whose art and intelligence have made her the arbiter of fashionable Paris for many years, and whose salon, in the palace of Louis XIII. where she resides, is the rendezvous for notables of all the European capitals, has a fund of interesting anecdotes concerning the great.

While Mademoiselle Sorel was in London taking part in the Molière memorial performances not so long ago Queen Mary, with the king and Princess Mary attended the second *matinée* of "Le Misanthrope." Queen Mary was wearing a simple gray dress, and she observed appreciatively the splendid Louis XIV. panner robe and headdress of plumes which the actress wore in her rôle.

"That is what I call a truly royal dress," said the queen to Mademoiselle Sorel. "Nowadays sovereigns dress just like every one else, and it is you, mademoiselle, who are a queen."



Emeralds de Menthe

By Winston Bouvé

Author of "The Left Hand of Luck,"
"Midas' Daughter," etc.

CANTRELL shut the door behind him, looked expectantly toward the very handsome young woman burnishing her nails before the dressing-table mirror. He saw her reflected exultation, a brief thing, nothing more than a covert smile, a gleam in her gray eyes, swiftly veiled, but it told him more than her laconic response to his entry.

"We had a charming afternoon. Motored to Heathstone and back again."

He had once told her that she had the most expressive back in the world; at the moment it presented an inscrutable and warning curve, quelling his impatience.

He glanced behind him, saw that the closet door stood ajar, and just then an elderly maid stepped out of the recess, a length of fur-bordered chiffon flung over her arm.

"Put out the silver slippers, and come back in half an hour to hook me up," Miss Cantrell ordered. "Unless Miss van Delden needs you then. If she does, I can manage by myself."

"I'm to wait on you, miss."

"And she doesn't relish the job," thought Mark to himself.

"Very well."

Cora dismissed her with a nod, and she went out, leaving in her wake a sort of civil hostility that was obvious to the young man and his sister.

"So she knows what's in the wind."

"Gerda has spoiled her badly." Cora bent her head over her nails once more, smiled. "She'll have to go, I'm afraid."

Cantrell laughed outright at her plaintive, measured regret. It was perfect.

"The lady of the manor! Did you land him easily?"

He tried to attain her suave restraint, but his eagerness couldn't be quite masked. It glistened in his eyes, hovered at his lips, which twitched restlessly under the small, neat mustache.

"It wasn't difficult."

"You're sure of him? It's official, I suppose."

"It will be after dinner. He'll tell Carl and Gerda then that in April they'll have a stepmother."

Cantrell puckered his lips.

"And what about the two intervening months? We've got to live, you know."

"We've gotten along before," she retorted, "on thinner ice than this. Play young Carl at bridge again!"

Her brother rose, paced the length of the solidly handsome chamber. His face, a face more remarkable for charm than strength, was shadowed by scudding clouds of thought.

"I've played him to the limit—and beyond. Van Delden keeps him short and he's afraid of the old boy. Look here, Cora, this is what he gave me last night."

Mark held out a blue slip. It was a check in four figures, made out to bearer, and signed, "Carl H. van Delden." It was the signature that held their attention, the careful, square-lettered signature.

"A forgery," she breathed, narrowed-eyed.

"Not bad for a kid, though. But it's of no use to us."

"Isn't it?" She took it from him, knitted her brows over the bold, black writing. "I think it is."

He reached for it, but she retreated, tucking it into the tight corsage of her tea gown.

"Give it back to me!"

"I won't." Her breath came short and quick through lips that were parted almost hungrily.

"What are you going to do with it?" There was no persuading her when she was in that mood, he knew.

"Never mind! You need money, don't you? You always do!"

"So badly that if you don't land old Van Delden we'll go under—and stay under. Would you risk our whole future for a paltry three thousand?"

"But if I can get that, too?"

It wasn't hard just then to decipher the significance of her lovely, lineless face. Her gray eyes glinted it, her very perfect mouth betrayed it. It was an all-engrossing greed. Her brother recognized it.

"You're a wonderful woman, Cora," he said slowly. She had earned the tribute. "But there's a flaw in you, an error in your cleverest planning. Do you know what it is? It's the desire for something more, no matter what you've got."

Her eyes shone; she nodded.

"I know. But, Mark, when luck falls into your hands you've got to grasp it!"

"And drop something else, something bigger and safer, that you've striven for! If you weren't a woman, Cora——"

Some one rapped on the door. She laughed softly, still gay.

"Run along. Margot's come to hook me up."

And the maid entered.

In the library of his country house, almost under the guest room in which his fiancée was dressing for dinner, old Carl van Delden sat smoking. He was called "old Carl" only because his son was called "young Carl," not because he was old, or even suggested the years he could claim. His big, spare body gave the impression of power, of maturity, but never of age. His leonine head, with its shock of iron-gray hair that sprang up defiantly from the brow, was still a fighting head, erect, strongly hewn, stubborn. The hand that held a very black, very bitter cigar was enormous, and one felt that it could wield portentous things. Such, in profile, was the master of the house. When he turned to the fire other qualities writ upon him leaped into light; Dutch qualities. The long, cautious upper lip, its compression, betokening closeness where money was concerned; more than a hint of coldness in the pale-blue eyes, and a stubbornly aggressive flare to the nostrils.

He would never have admitted it, but he was not enjoying that cigar. He was waiting for Gerda to come down, and he was not listening for her step outside with any pleasant anticipation.

Gerda was a delightful creature. He was fiercely proud of her at moments: when she came in from some late party, a little wan and rumpled, lovely in spite of a score of dances, a long, windy drive home, and he knew not another woman there could touch her for looks or vivacity; when she got the better of him in one of their frequent battles; when—which was rare—she gave in to his will, capitulated as her mother might have done—and conquered. But she was like him, as passionately self-willed, as obdurate as he himself. And she did not care for the obscure and beautiful Miss Cantrell. She had been civil to Cora and her brother, but there was that coolness between them that women use in place of open hostility. What would

she say when he told her that Cora had promised to marry him?

He moved uncomfortably in his chair. He didn't care what young Carl thought of his approaching marriage; young Carl didn't matter. A puny boy, this son of his, a weakling.

A snatch of song, a rustle of silk, and Gerda, bright against the dark door.

"All alone?" she called.

She had never feared him, even as a child. It was always Carl who had slunk out of his way, avoided his presence.

"The others will be down soon." The jerk of his shaggy head was an invitation to enter, an invitation she accepted.

Yet even when she had settled herself upon a hassock at his feet he hesitated, spoke of other things. Then, abruptly, he asked:

"Am I an old man, daughter?"

Womanlike, she knew what was coming; rage seethed in her, and turned to the pity one feels for a strong, wild thing, tamed and fettered; for Samson, shorn. It was terrible for old Van Delden to be wistful, wanting reassurance.

"You aren't old!"

"Too old for folly." He smiled grimly, reached down for her hand that played nervously with the delicate platinum chain she wore. "Gerda, I'm going to marry. I wanted to tell you first, my girl."

"You're going to marry Cora?"

"You don't like her?"

"I'm sorry." The blond head drooped. "I want you to be happy, father."

That wasn't enough.

"Go on," Van Delden demanded, roused by her repression. "Say it! What have you against her?"

She couldn't answer that, only raised her shoulders in a futile little shrug.

"We've only known them a few months. It seems—sudden, that's all."

She knelt before the coals, their

warmth upon her, remembered June at the Lucerne Hotel, where they had met these charming, rather baffling Cantrells. To her shrewd young eyes they were so obviously of a doubtful distinction. Strange that her father, of all people, had been blind to everything but the curve of Cora's cheek, her gray, compelling gaze.

"Being young and romantic, you're not sure she's marrying me for love, is that it?"

"Do you think she is?" Gerda looked squarely at him as she answered his question. He shoved back his chair, faced her angrily from his towering six feet one, and she rose, too, as people do in hostile moments.

"A woman of twenty-eight, with beauty to boot, doesn't marry a man of sixty for love, my dear. I'm not that much of a fool; but there are other—considerations."

Gerda smiled.

"Undoubtedly."

"That will do." He thrust out his lower lip in heavy wrath. "You can't speak disrespectfully of the woman I am going to marry. And when she is the mistress of my house she may demand courtesy and consideration as well."

The girl's fine mouth curled. She had no time to retort, for Miss Cantrell's entrance curbed the temperish moment. The tableau lasted while the tall, dignified, grandfather clock chimed the hour; Van Delden, arrested in anger, his big hands gripping a chair back, embarrassed, mute; Gerda cool, contemptuous, and very direct in her antagonism toward the newcomer, who posed against the portières, a study in sheenful bronze, hair and gown and slim, satin feet.

The beauty laughed gently, breaking the tableau.

"Don't let me interrupt."

"I've told Gerda of our approaching

marriage," said Gerda's father. "She wants to wish you all happiness."

Gerda ignored him.

"If I'm not—premature," she told the elder woman.

Their eyes met. A challenge was flung, warfare declared, and a battle begun while old Carl crossed the floor to a safe in the wall. It was a cunning thing, simulating one of the narrow oak panels until he pressed a bit of carving and it sprang out intact, disclosing a hidden, steel box. He came back with an old-fashioned jewel case in his hands. Cora drew nearer. She had heard of the Van Delden pearls.

"These have been the engagement gift of every Van Delden to the woman he was about to marry. Will you wear them, Cora?"

He unwrapped yellowed tissue from something that he handled as if it were very precious. Cora caught her nether lip between sharp, white teeth.

"They're very old, and have been dear to all of us, though their value is intrinsic."

"Modest," thought Cora to herself. Then she forced her lips into a smile. For the treasure he held out to her was a set of ancient and very lovely, but quite impractical, cameos. Cameos! Queer old earrings, seed pearl encircled, and a monstrous shield of a breast pin. And she had to exclaim over them, handle them reverently. Bah!

"I shall get you some pearls for your wedding present," he promised. "Gerda, of course, has her mother's jewelry."

She managed to thank him, and just then her brother and young Carl made a welcome interruption.

Dinner was announced presently, a dull, substantial meal that was redeemed only by the really fine Burgundy served in honor of the evening. That dinner made Cora shudder, elated as she was from her recent triumph. The scheme of things would undergo certain radical

changes when she came to rule here. She fancied that she wouldn't rule long in this deadly house. She'd persuade Carl to live in town; then they'd travel, of course.

Young Carl, at her left, was paying her extravagant compliments, eying her with bold devotion. He didn't know how soon he would be paying his respects to her in her new position. She smiled above her Burgundy. It would be good to be Mrs. Carl van Delden, with all the rest wiped out.

Old Carl rose, glass in hand.

"To you, Cora—my future wife!"

Thus briefly did he announce their betrothal to her brother and his son. She was conscious of Mark's oozing satisfaction as he toasted her in turn, of young Carl's stunned surprise. Gerda had guessed the truth for months, but then, Gerda was clever, she decided thoughtfully. She had to thank them all prettily, shyly.

They went back to the big, dark library for coffee and liqueurs, which were brought in by the elderly butler, who managed to look rather magnificent in spite of his well-brushed, but shabby livery. After she noticed his shabbiness she detected it all about her. Gerda's frock she gauged as a model of a season before. The damask hangings at the windows were faded, if one looked closely. Undeniably the elder Van Delden disliked expenditure. He mustn't forget about those pearls.

She maneuvered the talk into terms of gems as her fiancé brought forth a decanter of old curaçao from his wine closet over the hearth; refused to let him pour her any of the rare cordial.

"I'm a Philistine!" she laughed, her fingers closing about the stem of her frappé glass, in which crème de menthe tinted the ice crystals. "I never mix! Tell me, Carl, haven't those cameos a history? Old jewelry is so fascinating."

She had to listen to dreary annals of Van Delden's house, but it was worth

the boredom. For she had the opportunity to say:

"Let my pearls have a history, please. Am I to help choose them?"

He looked down at her from under his beetling brows.

"All jewels have histories, and luckless legends they are, for the most part. Yes, you shall choose your pearls, if you like."

"Show Cora that old stuff of Gerda's," suggested young Carl, who lounged against the mantel, ruddily handsome in the firelight that leaped over him. He had been drinking steadily, and only now had a certain strained and troubled look given way to the relaxation of liquor. He was watching his sister as she followed intently some card trick Cantrell was performing for her, and a sardonic smile touched his mouth from time to time.

For the second time that evening Van Delden went to the safe and withdrew a jewel case.

"These will be Gerda's on her twenty-first birthday," he explained. "Some of the pieces are quite nice. This pendant, for instance, and these filagree bracelets."

"Hideous!" interposed Gerda, from her chair. "All but the emeralds, at least. I shall have them made into eardrops."

Cora forgot her cordial at sight of the gleaming hoard before her. Her breath quickened as her fiancé dropped two exquisite green stones into her pink palm. She didn't even hear the story of how one Maria Van de Delden, lady in waiting to a certain naughty princess, had earned them by her wit in extricating her sovereign from a right royal predicament; how the flighty damsel had torn them from her own ears—which deserved to be boxed—and presented them to her discreet handmaiden.

"Maria's portrait is in the music room." Van Delden flung open the great, folding doors upon a vista of pol-

ished floor and dim-looming instruments; switched on the lights.

Together they stood under the old Dutch painting that, in spite of the centuries, still glowed with unquenchable color and vitality, though the girl who had posed in the stiff brocades had long been a handful of dust. Van Delden took back the great, green gems.

"She wears them in the portrait, you see."

An uncertain step came up behind them. It was young Carl, flushed and a little gay, Cora saw.

"Not sure that I congratulated you, dad," he assure him with a familiar, unexpected gesture that ended as a smart slap on old Carl's dignified shoulder. The friendly blow was ill-gauged and sudden. The jewels slipped from Van Delden's grasp as he turned irritably, and with a cry he stooped to recover them, as did young Carl.

Cora stood still, staring as if hypnotized at a fleck, a tiny, trembling fleck of green upon her white wrist. The others were approaching. She didn't hesitate long. Luck like hers shouldn't be trifled with. Automatically she set down the cordial glass, which she had been holding all along, slid it in the lee of the music rack on the grand piano, beside which they stood, and, dropping to her knees, joined the search on the floor.

It was Gerda who was naturally the most perturbed when, five minutes later, they looked at each other blankly, curiously.

"We were standing here; I heard them fall," declared Van Delden, his eyes upon his son. "They can't have vanished, you know."

"Damn funny thing," said Mark, who had dived unsuccessfully beneath the piano.

It was. It was even funnier an hour later when, after a systematic and sweeping search of the entire floor, no trace of the emeralds had been found.

"No need to call the servants in," said old Carl. "Better not, in fact. Gerda, you have the keys; see to it that these two rooms are locked so that no one can enter them. If the emeralds are not found by morning, I'll get in a private agency man. They must be found!"

Cantrell laughed shakily.

"I think we all need another drink. It's the spookiest thing I ever struck! Brrr!"

They wandered back into the library, silenced by the amazing happening.

"I feel so guilty," mourned Cora. "If I hadn't insisted on seeing them this wouldn't have happened!"

"Please!" begged Gerda generously.

"They'll be found, of course."

Almost simultaneously the gathering broke up for the night. Cantrell and his host went upstairs together, Cora paused in the hall for a last regretful word to Gerda, who, with young Carl, was sealing up the music room as far as lock and bolt would do it.

Then, with one foot on the stairs, Cora picked up the mint frappé that she had brought from the music room, and, with a queer little smile, drained it. The smile froze on her lips; she gazed wide-eyed into the pale dregs, from which the last of the ice had melted. A spasm of dismay succeeded her blank astonishment. The hand that held the glass trembled.

The emeralds, that had dropped unseen into her glass from Van Delden's hand, were no longer there.

Gerda drew shut the folding doors of the music room wearily. An hour had intervened since her father and the Cantrells had gone upstairs, and she and Carl had been searching futilely for the missing gems. The boy looked gray and haggard now, the effect of the liquor having worn off. Gerda watched him drop heavily into a big chair and came to perch upon its arm, running her hands through his crisp, fair hair.

Something, she knew, had been troubling him for a week. Was he in another of his periodical scrapes? Poor Carl, so dear, so gay, so charming in spite of his many frailties! Perhaps she loved him more because of them. They made it possible for her to shield him from old Van Delden's very certain temper, to mother him, and to lavish upon him all the devotion a young man in his twenties can often inspire in a younger sister. He smiled up at her rather miserably, she fancied, with something that did not approach mirth in his handsome eyes. She must find out what new misfortune lay heavy upon him—as soon as this affair of the emeralds was cleared up.

"Carl—" she began, and hesitated. It wasn't easy to voice the suspicion that she couldn't seem to evade: a bird's-eye vision of the moment when the emeralds fell, and vanished. Her father and Cora, standing at the piano. Cora, whose eagerness for the forthcoming pearls had been plain to the other woman. Cora, who, at the club one afternoon, had played bridge as if the highish stakes had been something to be battled for.

"Well?" The boy drummed restlessly upon the table beside him.

"Those emeralds couldn't have been swallowed into nothing. There's no crack, no recess where they could have rolled. Some one took them, Carl; it's the only thing that could have happened. Some one who needed ready money."

She looked at him, half frightened by the assurance that voicing her imaginings gave her. Would he understand? He flung himself out of the chair, faced her, pale, tight-lipped.

"So that's what you think! Well, you're wrong, for once. I'm in desperate need of ready money, Heaven knows"—he choked, remembering how desperate his need was—"but I didn't take them. I didn't find them! If I had—"

He turned away, a short, bitter laugh that sounded like a sob on his pale lips. And, Gerda, shocked into a silence that was beyond speech, put her hand to her head, dazedly shoved back a bright, disheveled lock. Why, she hadn't dreamed of his taking the emeralds! And he had taken for granted, her accusation, denied it with the hysterical fervor of guilt.

What did it mean?

Her small, strong hands gripped his slack shoulders.

"Tell me," she begged piteously.

"Tell me, Carl, what is it? Why are you in—desperate need?"

He only groaned and turned away. He couldn't face even her, it seemed, as he sank into his father's big chair, burying his agonized young face in his arms. Gerda knelt swiftly beside him, drew him into the tenderness of her embrace. She looked so absurdly young to be comforting him as his mother might.

"I can't bear it if you don't tell me. It'll be all right, Carl, no matter what you've done. I promise you that!"

Her consolation wasn't an idle thing. She'd paid his most pressing debts, faced his creditors a good many times. And once, she shivered at that memory, she had to buy off a disreputable young woman with her whole year's allowance—and her father's Christmas gift, a diamond and sapphire bar pin that she told him had been mysteriously lost in town.

"Not this time, Gerba. I'm through; ruined. Even you can't save me now."

"I will! Only tell me."

The eyes that looked into hers from between reddened lids and dark pouches beneath were drained of youth and hope and all the gay, glad things that made young Carl what he was.

"I've been gambling with Cantrell. We played for high stakes. I won at first—I suppose he let me—and then I began to lose. We've played night after night—I *had* to win back what

I'd lost. I didn't; but kept on losing more, and to-day, when he pressed me hardest, suavely enough, you know, but suggesting that father would pay up if I couldn't, I gave him a check."

"But you hadn't any more money!"

"The check I gave him was a check on father's bank, signed with father's name, made out—to me. I forged it. And, Gerda, I believe he knows that it's a forgery. I asked him not to cash it until after the first, as dad had given it to me for quite another purpose and he'd know where it went as soon as his bank statement came in. He agreed. But he knows why I want a week's time!"

The halting story was told. Gerda, stunned by the enormity of the boy's folly, was mute. His need was desperate, indeed. Could any one, in such a predicament, resist snatching at any saving straw? She pieced together the fragments of the night. Carl had suggested that her father show Cora the emeralds. Had he planned the thing, then? The fear wrenched at her heart. He had followed the two into the music room, slapped his father jovially on the back, whereupon the emeralds fell from his hand, and were not seen again.

That might have been coincidental, of course. But it was far more likely that, when they were all on their knees searching, the boy had come upon the jewels in some unexpected corner, had been unable to resist the overpowering temptation to appropriate them in his need. So it hadn't been Cora, after all. Yet she had made one interesting discovery about these dubious Cantrells; Mark gambled—and won. Clever Mark. She remembered those marvelous card tricks he had showed her earlier in the evening, and caught her breath.

But she shouldn't be wasting time conjecturing. The urgent need of the moment was to get back that forged check. She *must* get it back. If

Cantrell knew it was a forgery, he would use it to his best advantage, she was sure of that. Young Carl seemed to sense her fleet thoughts.

"If you could get that check back," he whimpered. "I'm afraid of the fellow, Gerda."

"I will get it back!" She wondered how.

"He'll never give it up. I'll simply have to make a get-away, or——"

She saw his gaze cross the library to the great desk; knew, by the look in his somber eyes, the twitching of his mouth, that he was thinking of the blue-nosed automatic lying in a certain drawer.

"Carl!" It was an agonized, hushed cry. "You wouldn't——"

"It would be a quick, clean end to things," he whispered. "To such rotten things. You'd better let me do it, Gerda."

She clung to him desperately, reminding him for a moment of the frightened child she used to be when they were alone in the dark.

"I couldn't bear it, Carl. Promise me—not that! And I'm sure I can get back the check. If I do, will you help me find mother's emeralds? That's all I'll ask of you."

"You still think I took them!" His ready temper flared, but she covered his lips with her palm.

"I said—some one; not you, Carl."

She couldn't hurt him any more. And when, comforted by her evasive response, whose evasion, manlike, he didn't see, he told her he'd do anything she wanted, always, if she got him out of this hole, she sent him upstairs to bed; followed him presently herself.

Her father spoke to her as she passed his door, so she went directly to her own room. In its warm, rosy security she found faithful old Margot waiting to brush her hair. She slipped out of her turquoise frock, into a dark, silk negligee, seated herself before the mirror for Margot's ministrations. The

brushing of her lovely hair seemed an interminable process and Margot lingered maddeningly long over the laying out of her night things. That meant she wanted to talk. She had been Gerda's nurse, and her old habits still clung to her. But the girl was not in the mood for confidences; she dismissed the woman, roamed, restless, about the room until somewhere in the house a clock struck twelve times. She knew her father's habits; if, as to-night, he retired early, he read until eleven-thirty, then turned out the light and was asleep in ten minutes.

She listened a moment at her door, and, shutting it softly behind her, trod noiselessly down the long hall. Both Cantrell and his sister were lodged in the west wing of the old house. Very gently she knocked upon his door, under which gleamed a thin blade of light, and the man confronted her.

His astonishment was apparent, with some other emotion that shadowed his handsome face briefly, and left it blank as a sponged slate.

"Please shut the door," she told him under her breath, and stepped past him into the room.

He was ready for bed, under the gayly brocaded dressing gown he wore, she guessed, from his bare feet, thrust into slippers, and his evidently collarless condition. The situation struck her fleetly as being rather amusing, but that was all. She was so full of the thing she had come for that being in a man's bedroom at midnight did not impress her with its aspect of compromise—until he smiled and spoke.

"Why am I—so honored?" he inquired. And immediately she was conscious of her hanging, plaited hair, her negligee. She flushed under his eyes.

"Because we have some business to discuss, Mr. Cantrell."

He paused perceptibly. Then:

"Won't you sit down?"

"No, thanks." He was waiting, only

his hands betraying his tension, his narrowed eyes betraying something else.

"I have come for the check my brother gave you this afternoon."

His tension relaxed.

"The check? Oh, yes, I believe he did give me a check for some bridge winnings to-day." He laughed in rather a puzzled fashion. "I haven't cashed it yet, but as he happened to owe it to me I don't quite see——"

"Why I should want it back? I think you do, Mr. Cantrell." Her grave, blue eyes searched his. "The check is a forgery. Don't you know that?"

He decided to abandon the pretense.

"And even so?"

"I can assure you that my father will not make it good. And he will, I'm afraid, sever all connection with you; perhaps you don't know his attitude toward gambling. I think it would be unfortunate all around. It would be so much better for you to give me the check now, and avoid all that!"

The faint tremble in her tones gave way to assurance as she voiced the veiled threat. Old Van Delden's daughter was of his own mettle.

Cantrell's blank face expressed none of the dazed surprise that filled him.

"If you don't return that check, I'll go to him myself."

"And ruin your brother? He's a very hard man, your father," parried Mark.

That killed her last doubt as to Cantrell's intent. Why, the man was a crook! And his sister——

"I see." Gerda smiled, pulled at the flowers on her sleeve, looked swiftly up at him. "Let's be quite frank. You've a great deal at stake, you and your sister, haven't you? More to lose than I have. Give me the check, for Carl's sake, and I'll see that you don't lose out. Knowing what you are, I'm willing even to let your sister marry my father, to save Carl. But if you don't give me that check, *now*, I'll rouse the household!"

Cantrell laughed pleasantly; lighted a cigarette.

"You wouldn't be such a little goose!" he told her genially. "For then your brother's fat would be in the fire and you, my dear girl"—his laughter sounded again on a guarded note—"you would be in a still more difficult position. Nice girls don't come to the bedrooms of their men guests after midnight, you know. Supposing my sister should drop in, hearing your dulcet tones! She'd never credit your presence here with so altruistic a motive, I'm afraid."

"Don't be a beast!" Gerda was aflame with rage. He had the impudence to saunter toward her, bold-eyed.

"Now if I had that check, I might give it to you; it's just as well that I haven't it. I'll tell you: we're quits, admittedly; I keep the check, you keep your mouth shut, and I give you my word not to make use of the thing. That's our compact; it might be sealed with a kiss, I suppose."

He was very close to her, for she had been unconsciously retreating all the while. Speechless with contempt and baffled wrath, she wrenched her hand away and came into contact with the bureau just behind her. She felt cornered, desperate. He was hideously right. Her father must never know about the check; he'd never forgive Carl for this peccadillo. And as for her, alone here in this man's room——

"A kiss," insisted those smiling lips so close to her own.

She reached behind her for a hair brush, anything that might prove effective as a weapon, and in her forceful haste sent a tray and its contents crashing to the floor. She hadn't time to wonder if the shattering of glass had disturbed the rest of the household. For the man's attitude underwent such an amazing change that she could only stare and ward him off, to see what damage she had done. With a snarl,

he tried to dive past her into the wreckage on the floor, and she screamed triumphantly, on her knees in a *mêlée* of broken glass and toilet articles. Splintered crystal—and something else—gleamed in a slow, spreading pool of green sirup on the pearl-gray, chenille rug. The contents of the tray she had knocked over had been a small carafe and glass and another, smaller glass—a cordial glass of *crème de menthe*.

Some one thundered at the door, and across the room the door that led into Cora's chamber was flung wide by that young woman. Gerda and Cantrell had risen, stood staring at each other as old Carl van Delden entered.

It was a curious tableau. Cora, horrified, gazed from her brother to the girl, and back again. Gerda, who didn't look exactly dismayed, though her breast rose and fell as if with some intense excitement, smiled at Cantrell and waited for the onslaught. It came soon enough, when Van Delden was able to speak.

"What are you doing in this man's room? Good heavens, Gerda!" He looked at her hanging hair, her disheveled negligee. His big hands clenched, whitened.

"Carl!" cried Cora apprehensively.

Gerda met Cantrell's enigmatic eyes, and made up her mind.

"I came here deliberately, of my own accord," she said, in a cool little voice. "Mr. Cantrell will tell you how surprised he was to see me."

Mr. Cantrell did, in brief, uncertain tones that Cora punctuated excitedly.

"Go to your room!" thundered Van Delden. He could scarcely articulate. Gerda slipped past him and he turned to the man. "Now, then——"

"Please!" begged Cora. "What a dreadful thing, Carl! But it's only a young girl's folly. Mark isn't responsible. He'll leave in the morning, of course."

"I most certainly shall." Her brother mopped his damp brow.

Van Delden ignored him, turned to Cora.

"He's your brother. If he weren't I'd——"

They watched him go, his broad shoulders bowed, uncertainty in his heavy step, a dazed, wretched old man.

Then Cora saw the debris by the bureau and dropped to her knees before the mess, as her brother did.

"So you changed glasses with me!" she shrielled, not at all beautiful at the moment. "You took them!"

"But they aren't here now!" His voice rose, too, on a hysterical note. They leaned back, looked at each other in dawning comprehension. Cora laughed, not prettily.

"Of course not, you fool; she's got them herself!"

A cold, gray February morning sifted through the library windows, whose curtains were still drawn. Of last night's cheery fire only gray ashes remained on the hearth. It was very early, but not so early that Gerda was still sleeping. She stood in a listening attitude, dressed in morning tweeds, her bright hair carefully done above her pale little face. She had had plenty of time, even at this hour, to make an immaculate toilet, for since the scene in Cantrell's room she had not slept.

Still listening intently, she went to the door; waited there. Yes, some one was undoubtedly creeping along the upper hall. Then the stairs began their faint protest, and Gerda revealed herself to the two who, baggage-laden, sought early flight.

"Won't you step into the library?" she invited.

Cora, drawing her handsome furs about her, rose to the occasion.

"Really, Gerda, altogether it seemed better after last night that I should leave with my brother."

"Lay off!" suggested Cantrell. "Well?"

They followed the girl into the library, where she motioned them into chairs.

"I must have the check!"

"And we lose out all round," sneered Cantrell. "No, my dear, no threats; you'll not give away that precious brother of yours, even to show us up!"

Gerda looked at his sister.

"Do you think for one instant that I'd let you marry my father, even to save Carl? I wouldn't!"

Cora smiled.

"Then why didn't you tell him about everything last night? You had the opportunity."

"But not the check!"

"You haven't it yet," purred the elder woman.

Gerda knew then that in spite of her discovery in Cantrell's room they still held the upper hand; knew that they knew it. If only she didn't love Carl so much! But she did. It was a desperate moment. She thought of the revolver in the desk drawer, but Cantrell sat between her and it. To hide her irresolution she took a cigarette, lighted it.

"We'll miss that train," complained Cantrell.

"And what will my father think of your leaving like this?"

Cora rose, with an indulgent smile.

"I left an explanatory note for him, of course; he'll think me most tactful, under the circumstances."

They had thought of everything. Gerda seethed with a sense of impotence.

"Wait!" She barred their way, a desperate sob in her throat. "I give up. I'll treat with you on your own ground. For that forged check, for your written assurance that you won't marry my father, I'll give you—this!"

With the table between them she held up a solitary, flashing stone, whose

green fire caught prisms of light. She heard Cora sigh softly, saw her creep nearer.

"Don't take it!" said Cantrell excitedly. "Don't be a fool, Cora! She's merely trying to buy you off. It isn't worth it! You'd lose more than you'd get."

"It's worth thousands!" whispered the woman. The look her brother recognized so well had come upon her beautifully cut face, sharpening each chiseled line and contour.

"Thousands," echoed Gerda softly. "And isn't it beautiful?"

Cora shook off the man's restraining hand, snapped open her silk bag.

"Here!" She put out her hand for the stone.

Gerda, whose knees were suddenly limp, took the creased, blue slip she offered, glanced at the potential signature, held it to the glowing end of her cigarette. It caught, blazed bright and true, as Cantrell tried, too late, to wrest it from her. And of Carl's folly only a pinch of black ash remained.

He swore savagely, wrenching cruelly at his sister's arm.

"You fool! You could have got both stones for that. It's what you always do! Your damned greed!"

Gerda slumped weakly into a chair, and buried her face in her arms. All she saw was Cora, jewel mad, exulting over the green stone. In the overwrought moment hysteria surged over her. She began to laugh, her mirth rising on the monotonous inflection of pure nerve strain. That uncontrollable laughter grated on her companions.

"Shut up!" ordered Mark Cantrell, looking fearfully toward the door.

"I c-can't," she gasped at last. "It's so awfully funny! Cora, so mad about that thing. It's pretty, yes—but it's nothing—but paste!"

Her blond head rested once more upon the table. Her shoulders heaved convulsively.

"Paste? Impossible!"

But Cantrell snatched the stone, eyed it strangely.

"Paste!" Between gasps of mirth Gerda explained. "You're quite lucky, really, Cora, not to be marrying into the family. We're broke all the time. I'm in as much of a hole as Carl is—was—with bills and things. You've seen my clothes! And I'm keen about bridge." She sat up, wiped the tears from her eyes, went on: "A month ago I took the emeralds in town to decide on a setting. I didn't. Instead, I pawned the originals and had very perfect duplicates made. After all, they were practically mine, and the duplicates were unusually good. Cora's fondling one of them now."

Laughter threatened her again.

"It can't be true!" Cantrell looked as if he wanted to kill her. His incredulous rage was an ugly thing.

"The pawn ticket's on my dressing table. Shall I get it?"

His answer was brief and very much to the point. With a snarl of thwarted rage, he flung the faceted stone at her with such force that, striking her soft cheek, it drew a spurt of blood, dropped into her lap.

"Let's get out of here!" sobbed Cora. And then she uttered a high-pitched scream. Old Carl van Delden stood on the threshold, barring the way.

Gerda, oblivious to the red trickle down her cheek, swayed toward him, holding out something cupped in both palms. Dazedly he took the two emeralds, one still warm from its resting place in her tweed pocket.

"I said they were paste, and they gave them back, father."

Van Delden stared at her, at the wound on her face.

"You mean they aren't!" shrilled Cantrell, aghast at the trickery and at all he had in his anger relinquished.

Then old Carl understood almost, but not quite, everything.

"Paste! These?" He roared with delight. "A queen's jewels—paste!"

Like a whipped, enraged cur Cantrell turned upon his sister.

"If it weren't for your damned greed!" he almost sobbed. "Now you're in for it!"

Van Delden drew a deep breath, shook his head, pulled the bell cord.

"No," he said slowly, "we couldn't be bothered." A servant answered his ring. "Miss Cantrell and her brother have been called back to town. They are leaving at once, Jephson."

Gerda, her hand in his, that trembled a little, felt a flush of pride in the big man beside her. Whatever his harsh shortcomings were, old Van Delden was indisputably a fine gentleman.

They were alone. With unusual tenderness he took her in his arms, put his lips a little awkwardly to the bruise on her cheek. She might demand her reward, she knew.

"Be kinder to Carl!" she whispered.

He drew her closer to his heart, so that she smiled radiantly over his shoulder to the boy who stood in uncertainty beyond the door.

Her lips framed a silent assurance and young Carl stepped out of the shadow of the dark hall into the library, flooded now with early morning sunlight which Jephson had just let in. His shoulders straightened, his head lifted, as if in crossing the threshold he had cast from him a troubling burden.

The elderly butler, announcing breakfast, noticed the crisp ash on the table top and sighed heavily. He disappeared of the new parlor maid.

Noticing his displeased glance, his young mistress said gayly:

"Susan dusted nicely." Then, her eyes on Carl, she added: "That's only—a scrap of paper I burned myself."

Young Carl understood. His face lighted up at a pleasant word from old Carl. And, arm in arm, they went in to breakfast.

The Bridge Flapper

By Austin Wade

Author of "The Man from China,"
"Good Hunting," etc.



FOUR men were lunching at the golf club of a popular winter resort in North Carolina. Their faces were animated in heated discussion.

"But I tell you," one was insisting, "I don't like flappers. They fidget and giggle." His pale, stony-blue eyes were defiant. He was a short man, rather solidly aggressive. His bristly, pepper-and-salt mustache partially hid his worst feature, a discontented, quarrelsome mouth; the almost bald head was sunburned a bricky red. He had come to the resort for a rest, which was rather pathetic, for he was the type of man whose indomitable energy never permits him perfectly to relax. This was Hector Gregg, one of the wealthiest bankers in Philadelphia.

Joyce Kennedy smiled. He was an attractive-looking fellow of thirty-five, with vague, restless, brown eyes. Temperamental. A born gambler. His bridge was his only claim to fame. On the golf course he was scarcely more than an impediment to the other players.

"Well," he said, "I'll say this much. If my wife weren't down here, there's nobody in the hotel I'd rather play bridge with than Miss Demarest." He was more than half serious.

"She doesn't look as if she knew one card from another," said George Holliday, a pleasant-appearing Boston Whist Club man.

The fourth man sat silently, not attempting to join in the conversation. He was younger than the others, undeniably handsome, of the arrogant, blond type, and rather unintelligent. He was Tommy Drake.

"She can play," insisted Joyce. "She's erratic, but she has a splendid foundation for a sound game. I can see you three don't believe me. Well, I'll get up a game to-night, and prove my point. But you don't play, do you, Drake?" Drake shook his head. He was rather sullen. "Well, then, Gregg, you and Holliday. What do you say?"

"But will she play with three men?" asked Holliday.

Joyce grinned.

"Men are her specialty. I've never seen her play with women."

"Rotten way to put in an evening—playing auction with a fool kid!"

"Why, do you think your wife'll mind?" There was malice in Joyce's tone. Gregg annoyed him at times. The man was so positive.

"What time do we play?" asked Gregg coldly.

"About nine o'clock, in the broker's room, shall we say?"

"Why the deuce there? The light's awful."

"Her father is here with her, you know. He won't let her play in the card room. Says it's no place for young girls."

A snort was Gregg's answer.

Young Drake lazily lifted six feet two inches of himself out of his chair.

"Well, I'm off for another eighteen. How about you, Holliday?"

"All right," laughed Holliday. "I noticed what you did to that pie, Drake. I expect to win at least three holes—one for each piece."

"How'd you come out this morning, Joyce?" Gregg asked.

"Oh, four blisters in one hand, fifth in partner's," laughed Joyce. "I'm through."

The four rose. Holliday and Drake made for the lockers and Joyce and Gregg sat on the wide porch, smoking. Men were already starting out on the first course. The very energy of their swings, the active lines of their figures as they moved off down the slope, affected Joyce with a kind of weariness. He looked at Gregg. The elder man lolled in his rocker, his eyes half closed; clouds of smoke issued from his thick, small pipe. Here were peace, warmth, the drowsy murmur of voices. Joyce's cigar was nearly out.

Minutes passed. Suddenly Joyce became conscious of a disturbing element. The drowsy calm was broken by the sound of a high young voice calling his name.

"Mr. Kennedy. Oh, Mr. Kennedy!"

Joyce opened his eyes and rose quickly to his feet.

"Oh, Miss Demarest, let me present Mr. Gregg." Gregg quitted his rocker with obvious reluctance. He acknowledged the introduction with a brief repetition of her name.

But she was not at all put out. She was rather a remarkable person, very small, very dainty. Soft, bright, bobbed hair—a luscious red. Large, deep-blue eyes set far apart, and a wide, smiling mouth.

She was dressed in sports clothes. An expensively simple brown wool gown; smart golf shoes and tan wool

6—Ains.

stockings; she wore no hat. One felt that even when she dressed for golf she made a ceremonial of the process.

She refused a chair, but sat on the steps at Joyce's feet. Novice and seer. It was subtle flattery. Her eyes, bright and steady, regarded him intently.

"I was just suggesting a bit of bridge for to-night," Joyce told her. "Mr. Holliday and Mr. Gregg can play. We hoped you'd make a fourth."

"I'd love it," she answered quickly. "but I'm afraid. Mr. Gwegg plays such a marvelous game."

Gregg noticed that she could not pronounce her r's. He wondered if this were affectation, and decided that it wasn't. He said that he had looked forward to the game, at which Joyce found it hard to repress a smile.

"Playing golf this afternoon, Miss Demarest?" asked Joyce, for something to say.

She looked at him wisely.

"Call me Mawon," she said, not in answer to his question.

"Thanks, I'd like to." Then he asked: "Is it a nickname? How do you spell it? Like the—the——"

She burst out laughing.

"Like the nut? Exactly. Would you like to hear the stow?"

"I didn't mean to be personal, but I'd like to very much."

Her face went suddenly grave.

"Well," she began, "once upon a time there was a young mawied couple, who had three lovely girl babies. Of course, then they wanted a boy. As luck would have it, a fourth girl awived. They were most awfully annoyed. So, to get even, they called the girl Mawon. That's me. But, of course, I couldn't help being a chestnut."

At the finish of the silly little tale a low, deep, throaty sound, gradually swelling in volume, came from Joyce's right. Hector Gregg, the stolid, unimpressible, was shaking with laughter.

When, finally, he controlled himself his face was rather red.

"That's rich," he said at last. "Oh, that's rich."

Laughing, she jumped to her feet.

"Well, if that's all the sympathy I get, I'm going. See you this evening about nine." She waved a hand, and went off quickly toward the caddie house.

During dinner that evening at the hotel Joyce was rather sheepish. Paula Kennedy knew that there was something on his mind. She waited. Finally it came.

"Paula, dear, do you mind if I play bridge this evening instead of going to the movies?"

Paula was annoyed.

"But, Joyce, it's the 'Yankee in King Arthur's Court.' I've been looking forward——"

"Why can't Mrs. Gregg go with you?"

Paula made a face.

"Mrs. Gregg is deadily dull and she has no sense of humor. Besides, you promised."

"Yes, but Gregg got me into a bridge game." Joyce lied desperately. He had forgotten the movies entirely. "I couldn't very well refuse. You know how important Gregg is to me. One of the biggest——"

"Oh, well." Paula was resigned.

"That's fine, Paula. We'll go to the movies to-morrow night."

"No, we won't. They're showing 'Heart of Gold.'"

"Well, some other time, then." Joyce was affable.

"Who are playing to-night?"

Joyce hesitated too long.

"Why, Gregg and Holliday and——er——Gregg asked Miss Demarest to make a fourth."

"Oh!" Paula fully comprehended now. Thoughtfully she patted the

blond hair that waved so smoothly over her ears.

At that moment Marron Demarest entered the dining room. She wore a gown of flesh-colored satin, with a bizarre girdle of pearls. There were pearls about her neck, too. Her burnished hair, her exquisite skin, and her perfect poise called for immediate recognition. Behind her came her father, an impressively tall man, with a well-bred dignity. He was tremendously proud of his daughter, even though he had wanted a son.

Paula looked at the girl curiously. No, she wasn't cheap. Eccentric, perhaps, but refined.

The Demarest table was near the door. Young Drake passed, halted, and bowed, in his abrupt, boyish way. He shook hands with Mr. Demarest. Marron's eyes lighted with interest. They never left his face.

Paula caught the look. So that was it—a flirtatious type. Well, nothing could be done about it, as far as Joyce was concerned. Open objection would only serve to make him stubborn. It would have to wear off gradually, she supposed.

An hour later bridge started in the broker's room, an almost square apartment, in which there was a huge, stone fireplace. On the mantel stood several old Toby jars and a bowl of polished brass. There were dim lights in brackets, giving the room an intimate, cozy atmosphere.

Holliday was introduced. Marron liked him immediately—his odd, impersonal eyes, the slight, half-humorous curl of his mouth.

Gregg had dressed carefully. His evening clothes were irreproachable. He looked very sleek and clean. There was a definite mental strength about the man.

Marron was all enthusiasm. What should they play for, she wanted to know. Joyce hesitated.

"Oh," she said lightly, "I'm used to playing high. What's your regular game?"

"We play five cents usually," said Gregg, in his abrupt way.

"That's fine for me," she answered. "But keep the score in hundreds. Father might come in. He's terribly opposed to any kind of gambling for young people."

She sorted her hand like lightning.

"One no twumps," she declared.

Paula Kennedy and Mrs. Gregg went to the movies.

By ten o'clock the game in the broker's room was absorbing. The hands were big, irregular, tricky. Marron thrived on the game. She played to the score. She played to win, and yet she was a born gambler. Joyce felt a bond—a dangerous, subtle bond—between them. He noticed that Gregg couldn't take his eyes off her. She teased and flattered him by turns. He thoroughly enjoyed both.

At one time, when Joyce was playing the hand, Marron rose.

"Courtesy of the table, please. I want to get some cigawettes."

"I've some Murads," said Gregg, offering a handsome case, striped in yellow and white gold.

"How about a Pall Mall?" asked Holliday.

"Or Luckies?" suggested Joyce.

For a fraction of a second she hesitated. Then she said:

"No, thanks. I only smoke 'Wichmond Stwaight Cuts.'"

She was gone for half an hour, apologizing when she returned for the delay. Mrs. Whitcomb had kept her, a tiresome woman, subject to extraordinary ailments, concerning which she was prone to become confidential.

Marron's eyes were very bright as she took her seat to resume the game.

Half an hour later Paula and Mrs. Gregg returned from the movies. The

latter was a small woman, but tremendously plump. One could fancy the effect of a pin inserted in her well-rounded arm—a terrific explosion, and, on the floor, a black-brocade evening gown. Her face was very pink where she applied rouge and very white where she applied powder; in effect, something like tomato bisque. Her eyes were habitually reproachful, and when she laughed her chin trembled slightly. She stood with one fat hand on her husband's shoulder, watching the game blankly. She didn't know what it was all about. She didn't want to. Her evening slippers were too tight and her feet hurt her. "Well," she said, several times, querulously. It was an invitation to Hector to come to bed, but he bid and played with a stubborn finality, paying no attention to her.

Paula saw that Joyce was regarding Marron with a peculiarly concentrated look, and she had an idea that, beneath the table, Marron's pearl-strapped slipper was touching Joyce's pump.

The girl was a man chaser, and her medium was bridge. She was clever, original, and dangerously young. Paula frowned. Mrs. Gregg was tugging futilely at her sleeve. Paula detested the woman.

"Make them stop. I'm tired. Make them stop, Mrs. Kennedy."

Because Paula was worried, she spoke with unnecessary sharpness.

"Why not go to bed if you're tired? That's what I'm going to do."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Gregg. She had not thought of that. "Well——"

Paula and Mrs. Gregg said good night and left the room. Outside in the hall they ran into young Drake. He looked rather glum, and passed them with a brief nod.

During the next few days Paula came to marvel at the prowess of the "bridge flapper," as Marron had been christened by George Holliday. She was indefatigable in attracting men of

all ages. And, like Hector Gregg, "those who came to scoff remained to worship."

Gregg and Joyce had become very intimate. They used each other as alibis.

Mrs. Gregg would have become just as intimate with Paula, but the latter rebelled. The woman was too ponderously simple. Paula was dreadfully afraid of her sticky sympathy.

Marron won steadily at bridge: a hundred dollars, a hundred and fifty dollars. She couldn't need the money, surely, and yet the winning of it seemed to mean a great deal to her. There was about her a veiled excitement, a kind of restless expectancy. Joyce couldn't understand her. Holliday couldn't understand her. Gregg was damned if he could understand her.

She distributed her favors evenly. When any one of them sought her company outside of bridge she was complacent, giving as good as she received in repartee. But a certain something was lacking. She was at her best at the bridge table.

To Joyce, who possessed a finely analytical mind, her character was both baffling and fascinating. At one time he caught her in an apparently senseless lie, and was childishly delighted; this might be a clew, perhaps, to her complex personality.

She was in the main hall one evening before dinner, waiting demurely for her father. Joyce sat beside her and offered her his cigarette case. She took one—a Lucky Strike. As he gave her a light he remembered that she had very definitely stated that she smoked nothing but Richmond Straight Cuts.

"These cigarettes are a little dry," said Joyce casually.

"They're quite alright. I like them," she assured him, and wondered why he smiled.

That evening the four played, as

usual. Gregg was playing the hand when Marron said again:

"Courtesy of the table, please. I want to see if the mail's in."

Joyce looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock. If he remembered rightly — She was gone over half an hour this time. The three men chatted together rather irritably. She apologized on her return, but offered no explanation. For several hands her game was erratic. Joyce grew thoughtful.

On the following day Mrs. Gregg cornered Paula, who sighed despairingly. She knew what was coming.

"My dear," said Mrs. Gregg, "we must do something." They were sitting on a side porch of the hotel. A slight breeze brought to them the subtle perfume of wistaria, which clung and twisted about slim, white pillars, pale lavender and very lovely. Paula sniffed a moment appreciatively before she answered. What a bore this woman was!

"About what?" asked Paula coldly.

"Why, about our husbands and that bridge flapper, as they call her. But I have a better name for her. She's a vampire, that's what she is!" Mrs. Gregg's chin quivered. Paula squirmed. What if the woman should weep! Horrible! Plump, shaking flesh. Paula resented the use of the word "our," though she knew that it was justified.

"I can't see that there's anything to trouble about," said Paula lightly. "She's a harmless little thing. It's her bridge game that draws them."

"But," argued Mrs. Gregg, with an odd, new guile, "I've heard people say that you play a better game than she does."

Paula frowned. Mrs. Gregg was right.

"Well, she's young and pretty and superficially clever. She's quite witty, too. She amuses them. I've always

thought that your husband had a good sense of humor." This last was nasty.

Mrs. Gregg produced her handkerchief. She was, oh, she was going to cry! Paula felt trapped.

"We'll have to stand together; we'll have to lean on each other," Mrs. Gregg was saying. A great tear trickled down her plump cheek, making a moist path through powder and rouge. Then she added, with sudden viciousness: "I'm sure she's not all that she should be. Do you suppose that's really her father with her?"

Paula was rather amused. Mrs. Gregg was only a laughable grotesque, after all.

"Why, of course he's her father. I've met him several times. The family is one of the nicest in New York."

"Well"—Mrs. Gregg wagged her head slowly and rocked herself to and fro—"you can do as you like, of course, but I'm going to watch her. I value my husband."

Paula checked angry words. It was funny. Why not laugh it off? And yet, she remembered suddenly the red, flaming hair that framed a piquant, lively little face, relentlessly young! Then she rose and left Mrs. Gregg on the porch, rocking, rocking back and forth. But the sound of that rocking followed her upstairs.

During the next few days Joyce continued his psychoanalysis undisturbed. He had added one mysterious, unexplainable bit to his data concerning Marron Demarest.

One evening the bridge game had come to an early close, with Marron, as usual, a big winner. She had held extraordinarily good cards and played them well. After the game Joyce paused a moment with Marron at the open door of the card room. He was standing very close to her, and turned sharply at an odd sound. There could be no mistake, it was a little, pitiful

sob, choked back almost before it was out. The sensitive mouth quivered and the great blue eyes brimmed with tears. But she was herself again directly, forcing a smile.

"It's awfully crowded, isn't it?" Joyce was searching the card room for a clew. Any one of two dozen men and half a dozen women might have caused that sob. Possibly even it had nothing to do with the occupants of the card room, was just accumulated nervousness. Women were funny that way.

Joyce shrugged and gave it up. He wanted to comfort her, though, when she said good night without her accustomed gayety and went upstairs slowly, as if she were very tired.

He watched her out of sight and then strolled aimlessly out on the porch. The night was hot and he wasn't sleepy. He felt, too, that Paula might be waiting up for him. He felt a little guilty about Paula. A walk suggested itself. He took the main road to the golf club, keeping to the right at the deer inclosure. Tall pines rose darkly. The needles beneath his feet deadened the sound of his steps. There was no moon. Joyce walked as far as the railway tracks, then turned back, on the other side of the inclosure this time.

He was almost on top of them before he saw them: two figures, standing together just to the left of the path. Joyce stepped back involuntarily. He had no wish to eavesdrop on happy lovers. Then he recognized the girl's voice—low, with a new vibrance, but undoubtedly Marron's. In his astonishment, Joyce was rooted to the spot. The man stood with his back to Joyce. He was quite tall and stooped slightly, his arms about the girl. When he spoke his voice was thick with emotion. Joyce did not recognize it.

"Oh, Marron, dear, I hate myself."

"Sh-h," she whispered. "You mustn't say such things." Then, with

a quick gust of feeling, she went on: "Oh, my dear, I think I love you too much." Her arms were around him. Joyce could hear her breathing in little, quick gasps.

Then he crept cautiously away. At those last words of hers something had caught at Joyce's throat. There are some things one cannot do to satisfy idle curiosity.

Joyce retraced his steps, and went slowly back to the hotel. He could not help wondering as to the man's identity. Did he know him, Joyce wondered? Whoever he was, he was a darned lucky fellow. But why the secrecy? It was baffling.

At breakfast on the following day Mrs. Gregg wore a triumphant expression. She ate rapidly two eggs instead of one—a bad sign. As Paula and Joyce passed her table she grinned slyly.

"Odd woman, Gregg's wife," said Joyce. "What's the matter with her now, do you think?" He held Paula's chair.

"Heaven knows! But I shall find out soon enough. I really think, Joyce, that if that woman comes down here another season, I shan't be able to stick it out. She's too awful."

Joyce was suddenly contrite.

"You poor dear!" he said. "And you've had such a lot of her." Then, "I've been an inconsiderate beast. Forgive me, Paula. Let's get up a game to-night, or shall we go to the movies?"

"I'd love either. But how about the bridge flapper?" Paula could not resist voicing the question in her thoughts.

"She—oh, well, she was an interesting study—psychologically. But too much of her gets on one's nerve." Joyce lied shamelessly and successfully.

"That's the way she struck me," agreed Paula brightly. "To any man of real intelligence—"

She didn't finish the sentence. She didn't need to. Joyce flushed with

pleasure. That morning marked the beginning of a family reunion; a new respect for each other's opinions; a new enjoyment of each other's society. Married life at its best.

As Paula sat in the main hall after breakfast Mrs. Gregg plumped her fat person into an adjoining chair and beamed.

"I've good news for you, Mrs. Kennedy. It's just as I said." She began to rock. Paula shuddered. Well, anything to get it over.

"What do you mean?" Paula couldn't keep the note of hostility from her voice.

"Just as I said. Just as I said," crooned Mrs. Gregg, rocking furiously. She stopped her chair with a jerk and leaned very close to Paula. "I bribed the chambermaid," she whispered.

"What for?" asked Paula, in genuine surprise.

"Why, to find out about that little red-haired hussy. She's on our floor, you know. Well, the maid wouldn't tell me at first. But ten dollars did the trick. The Demarest girl's bed hadn't been slept in last night. The covers had been mussed up, but the maid said it was a poor job—nobody could fool her, she said. She's worked in hotels too long."

Paula felt suddenly ill. She rose to her feet and stood looking contemptuously down at Mrs. Gregg.

"That child!" said Paula. "Why, I don't believe it! Even if it were so, there's some simple explanation. She's flirtatious, perhaps too much so, but there's nothing wrong with her."

Mrs. Gregg's face had become very red. Her bit of scandal had, she felt, been received inappropriately. She was furious. She glared at Paula.

"Well, I'm not going to sit by and let a girl of her type monopolize my husband!"

Paula hesitated. She was thinking fast. She looked once at Mrs. Gregg's

hard, vindictive face, and made up her mind.

"What are you going to do?" she asked. Then, as she saw suspicion in the other's eyes, "Perhaps you're right, after all."

Mrs. Gregg brightened.

"I believe it's my duty, my positive duty, to go to her father. He should know. Poor man, I pity him!"

Paula thought, "So do I!" But aloud, she said only:

"When are you going to speak to him?"

"This morning. As soon as I see him."

"Well, maybe you're right," said Paula again, and moved off down the hall. As soon as she was out of sight she ran upstairs and rang Marron's room. Paula spoke quickly:

"Miss Demarest, this is Mrs. Kennedy speaking. I can't explain over the phone, but there's something you ought to know. Believe me, it's really important. Will you come to my room? It's number six sixty-two."

"Yes, and thank you!" Marron hung up the receiver.

Paula smiled with relief. She was afraid the girl might be stubborn and refuse to come.

Some five minutes later there came a tap on the door.

"Come in," said Paula. Marron paused a moment irresolutely on the threshold before she came forward at Paula's invitation and sat on the foot of the bed. Her eyes were slightly red and her face almost colorless.

Paula started to speak quickly.

"First of all, Miss Demarest, I'd like you to trust me. I'm not sure why I'm doing this. It doesn't matter. The point is simply this: you probably realize that several married women in the hotel have felt—well, rather antagonistic toward you. After all, you can't blame them. Now, one of them, entirely convinced of your bad character,

bribed the chambermaid this morning to tell what she knew."

Marron's eyes shone dangerously from her white face.

"How dare you, oh, how dare you! It's outrageous!" Tears of rage were very near the surface.

Paula laughed.

"My dear child, don't be melodramatic. It wasn't I, or I shouldn't be telling you about it. I'll not give you the woman's name. She's entirely unimportant. But that chambermaid either has a good imagination, or——" Paula shrugged.

Marron was trembling now. She was on the verge of hysteria. Her fingers plucked at the tassel of her silk sweater.

"Tell me what the maid said."

"That your bed hadn't been slept in." Marron uttered a little, pitiful moan. Paula leaned forward and shook her gently. "Brace up, dear, I'll do my best to get you out of this. Perhaps you'd like to tell me about it?"

Marron spoke quietly now.

"It's quite true that I didn't sleep in my bed. But it's not true—what she thinks. Oh, I've wanted so to tell somebody!"

"Of course, dear. Go on."

"First, do you know Tommy Dwake?"

"Yes, the quiet, blond boy."

Marron's eyes softened to twin, blue pools.

"Tommy and I have been secretly engaged for months. Tommy has very little money and a job that doesn't pay well—he lost his regular job when he enlisted in the Aviation during the war. Father never approved of him. They belong to the same club in New York and father heard that he gambled. He did, but he did it so that he could get money to take me out on parties. As soon as I found out I stopped him, but not soon enough. He was in awfully deep, had even been posted at the club. I was terribly afraid that father would

hear of it, so I induced him to take me away. Then Tommy went mad. He had to see me, he said. He chucked his job and followed me down here, as the guest of a mawied couple. Father suspected something and told me once for all that he wouldn't have me wunning about with Tommy."

To Paula, the story seemed nothing more than a simple girl-and-boy affair; still, Marron's tired eyes and the slightly drawn look about her childish mouth hinted at tragedy, however youthful.

"Well," Marron continued, "those poker debts of Tommy's had to be cleared. I couldn't bear that any one should say—you see, I love him," she finished simply, and paused a moment, striving for control. Then, "I had no weady money, no allowance. I charge everything I want. I didn't dare pawn my pearls. So I thought I'd twy bwidge. Father hates gambling. He never allows me to play for more than half a cent. But I knew that if I lost, he'd have to settle. I took a chance and I won—six hundred dollars, enough to pay those debts and give Tommy a new start.

"I've been seeing Tommy whenever I had the chance. At first I slipped away during the bwidge game, but your husband grew suspicious. So I began meeting Tommy after bwidge, down by the deer park. Father goes to bed early and I have my own key. I'd say good night to evwybody and go upstairs. Later I'd come down again and slip out of the Fwench window in the little parlor at the bottom of the stairs. But Tommy was awfully jealous. He claimed that I flirted outwageously with evwy man in sight. I did, of course. But I wouldn't tell him why. I'd intended to tell him that father had given me an allowance.

"We quaweled for the first time. He had made me a pwomise to give up poker, but he evidently considered that

my flirtations gave him the wight to bwreak it. Last night's winnings completed my six hundred dollars. I had planned to meet Tommy, give him the money, and send him back to New York. On the way upstairs your husband and I looked in at the card woom. Tommy was there, playing poker. He didn't see me. I was vewy unhappy. It all seemed so useless, somehow—my loving him, I mean. But I met him later at the usual place. He was late. He had won this time, but—he'd bwoken his pwomise. We had a fearful scene, but I forgave him. I couldn't help it. Then I gave him the money—he didn't want to take it, but I made him. Evwything was—oh, wonderful!

"When I got back to the hotel I found that I'd lost my key. I searched my hand bag again and again; it wasn't there. I was in a bad fix. It was after two and I didn't dare wake father to get in. The ladies' wash woom was a few doors from us. So I slept there—on the floor. I knew that father leaves his key on the ledge above his door when he goes to bwreakfast in the morning. I could slip out then, get it, and go in, thwrough his woom.

"It worked perfectly. Father doesn't wake me till he comes up from bwreakfast, and I was dwessed in sports clothes by then. That's the whole stowwy. Now, what can I do? If father hears of it, he'll never forgive Tommy."

Paula rose to her feet.

"I think that I can keep the woman quiet," she said simply.

"You're vewy sweet to me," said Marron unsteadily.

"Where is your father now?"

"He's wighting a letter in the little woom opposite the newsstand."

"Then, wait here for me!" ordered Paula.

Mrs. Gregg still sat where Paula had left her. She still rocked and waited,

looking up and down the hall with small, eager eyes.

Paula sat down next to her.

"I've saved you a great deal of embarrassment, Mrs. Gregg," Paula told her.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I decided that you must be right in your opinion of Miss Demarest. My husband was involved, too, you know. So when I met Mr. Demarest coming from his room, I asked him to step into the sitting room at the foot of the stairs—that there was something I ought to tell him. He was very polite, very dignified. He waited until I had finished. Then he courteously informed me that his daughter had been secretly married. She had told him herself only a few days previous, for he had been opposed to the match. He thought them both too young. He had forgiven them, however, and expected to announce it as soon as they return to New York. You can imagine how I felt. I apologized, of course. It was too awful."

Mrs. Gregg was angry at Paula's interference, but she could not envy her her interview with Mr. Demarest. She

shuddered at the thought of her own narrow escape.

"A pretty married woman *she'll* make, to be sure," said Mrs. Gregg spitefully, "flirting with every man in the hotel." Again she started to rock and Paula departed hurriedly, to take the good news to Marron.

"How did you do it?" Marron wanted to know.

Paula told her.

"You'd better leave as soon as you conveniently can, my dear. She's sure to begin talking about your marriage."

"I'll make an excuse to leave the day after to-morrow. Once in New York, and with that ghastly club bill fixed up, I believe I can bring father around. If I can't, I'll marry Tommy anyway. So that's that!" Marron's face rippled into smiles, as she held out both hands to Paula impulsively. "I can't thank you enough, Mrs. Kennedy. You've been wonderful."

"Well," smiled Paula, "my husband thinks you're wonderful, too."

And the bridge flapper had the grace to blush.



TO DORIS

IN thy warm lips and red I find sweet wine
Like smiling vintages of days so old,
Which white-clad Hebe bore in beakers gold
To Jupiter upon the Mount sublime;
The mystery and lure of far-off clime
Where bravest sailors never dare to go,
Are in thy eyes when they as sweetly glow
As those of dryads in the golden time.

Thy lambent cheeks, sweet Doris, feel to me
Soft as a lovely dew-dipped rose,
Ere autumn comes and wanton summer goes;
Dear, silken Doris, I do love but thee;
Thy golden locks like elfish fireflies shine;
Dear, silken Doris, say that thou art mine!

FREEMAN HARRISON.



Trumpeter of the Dawn

By Augusta Coxé Sanderson

Author of "The Girl Who Died,"
"In Defense of the Weak," etc.



IT was good to be back in England, and when I had seen Dorothy Madden, daughter of my old friend, David Madden, safely into the hands of her chaperon, and got them started on the cathedral tour, I turned my attention to renewing old friendships.

I went down to Hants to spend the week-end at Dene's Thorpe with the Ripleys—to be exact, with Lady Ripley and her stepson Sanford, who was also her nephew, in a way, before that. I found the atmosphere a bit tense. Evelyn gave me to understand before tea came in that they had been having a bit of a row—although her words were never so inelegant—and that they had come to an impasse.

"But I give you my word, John, San shall do as I say."

Lady Ripley, large and masterful—the Clerestons all have huge noses—assumed the reins of conversation when the man had brought in tea and fetched Sanford from the garden, where he had taken refuge from her dominance.

"Government is dishonest, plainly so. England stood the war, gave blood, and we gave our sons and our money, gladly and cheerfully. But these taxes!" She waved a large hand as if taxes, personified, stood before us. "The government is battenning, positively battenning, on us. Six shillings to the pound, they

said at first, but it soars and soars." She interrupted herself long enough to pour the tea, and then resumed. "The country will have to rise and put it down. Fight, unpleasant as it is. That is the only way either a nation or an individual can have peace. Tyranny always has to be put down by force."

I saw Sanford's cup pause on the way to his lips. I drank my tea in silence, but she, too, had noticed her stepson's acute interest and shot him a vitriolic look that did precisely what she intended: stung him to speech.

"Aunt Ev"—his secret name for her was the "Trumpeter," I learned later—"you know you have always had a queer philosophy."

"What, may I ask? If it has any bearing on taxes."

"Well, no. Life," he answered, I feared a bit rudely. But he could not be blamed. "'Unpleasant before pleasant,' it was, and then don't do the pleasant."

Lady Ripley, having sufficiently angered him, chose to retire and play the injured innocent.

"I don't know, Sanford, what you mean. You know I do not understand philosophy. Have some more tea, do, and a bit of cake."

"Well, if you don't know philosophy, I'll come down to brass tacks—to chapter and verse. Take this matter of tea,

now. How many times you used to say to me, 'Eat your bread and butter before you take any cake,' and then, for some perfectly silly reason, you'd do me out of the cake."

"That is a small thing for a grown man to harbor all these years." Unable to deny the charge, she chose to be dignified.

"Then take that trip to Venice. You promised when I was seventeen that if I——"

"You can go to Venice any time, if you will——"

"That is begging the question. But I *am* going—on my wedding trip."

"Marry Kitty and go. That is just——"

"I'm damned if I will!"

"Well, I'm——" Lady Ripley, clergyman's daughter that she was, banged her fist on the tea table and rose, injury battling with anger for the mastery of her features. But Sanford had put down his teacup, bowed discreetly and left the room, and the situation was exactly as it was before tea, a deadlock.

In exasperation Evelyn Ripley turned upon me.

"That's your fault, John Warde. He has taken courage from you. He has rebelled a bit sometimes, but he has never sworn at me before."

"More self-control than you ought to expect," was on the tip of my tongue, but I only helped myself to currant cake and held out my cup for more tea, which she had the grace to pour for me. Then, when she had calmed down a bit, she said:

"I am sorry to have let you in for this, John. But I am sure San would not have——"

"Blame me if you like, my dear. Old friend of the family, and all that. Blame me, of course. But I have not had six words with the boy. If you want to know, he took the cue from you

about—well——" I saw I was getting into thick weather.

"Well?"

"Oh, what you said about nations and—er—individuals."

"John Warde, do you mean to tell me to my face that I am a tyrant?"

"By no means, my dear Evelyn, by no means!" And I, too, put down my cup and left the drawing-room.

I found San upon the terrace, but I knew that, although he was gazing off to where St. Katharine's Point and the whole west cliffs of the Isle of Wight glistened white in the afternoon sun, he was seeing none of their beauties. He turned at my step, a handsome chap of two and twenty, shy and reserved as are all English boys.

"I am sorry, Mr. Warde, that I let myself go. I'm an awful ass, really."

"I know, I know, my boy. I'm a bit of an ass myself, now and then. But I am glad of a chance to get acquainted with you. I have been in the States so much since you were small. I knew your father, we were schoolboys at St. Leonard's together. And your mother—your own mother, I mean."

"I can't get any one to tell me about her. She wasn't like Aunt Ev, was she?"

"No, not as I remember her, not like Lady Ripley is now, at least."

"Oh, Aunt Ev hasn't changed since I can remember. She will never change."

And then bit by bit, in this and later talks, the lad's story came out. When his mother was ill in India Colonel Ripley, his father, had sent him home to his mother's cousins at Clereston Vicarage. He grew up shy and lonely, living as much to himself as if there had been no other occupants of the house, and there was nothing to remind him of his parents and the happy life he had known in India.

There was only the vicar, kindly and sweet, but living truly in another world,

and the unpleasant Aunt Evelyn, as he was taught to call her. There was, to be sure, a Bedlington puppy which Doctor Frazer gave him, not a very good Bedlington, the doctor said, the runt of the litter. But San loved him. He was alive and had sympathy.

There was, too, the Trumpeter. He stands as he has stood for centuries, since fifteen hundred and something, in storm and fair weather, a brazen, blatant figure on the sloping roofs of the Monk's Chapel at Clereston Abbey, Medley, Hants. One imperious hand is outstretched as if for silence over all the pleasant valley of the Arde, while he, in seeming, heralds the coming day. As San looked out and up from his bed early each morning he saw him—the Trumpeter of the Dawn he was called—standing stark against the morning sky. To the lonely boy he stood for all that was hard, inexorable, awful!

Out of the peaceful night, San thought, he called the dawn. Made it obey whether it would or no. San believed that he made the simple villagers rise to another day. Each morning they were promised a day of ecstasy and glory. And they rose, not to these, but to toil, heavy, unremitting, stupid. Only to be trumpeted by him, at night, to bed and oblivion.

When Sanford's mother died in India Aunt Evelyn went out. Ostensibly she went to visit her dear cousin's grave. But all Clereston Village knew that really it was with the intention of marrying the widowed colonel and returning home some day Lady Ripley.

Then came the war. The vicar was too old to go and San too young. They lived very quietly, with the Bedlington, under the shadow of the Trumpeter on the chapel roof.

To the sensitive lad's imagination, the Trumpeter called forth now, not only the dawn and the simple village toilers, but all the malignant armies of hate from the East and from the West, send-

ing them abroad by his blasts to clash and fall in battle over-all the quiet valleys of the earth. San dreaded, yet longed for the time when he should be old enough to answer that awful summons.

Then Colonel Ripley was ordered home. On the voyage that gallant soldier planned how he should conduct the war. He drew plans and hurled millions of men against the paper hordes of the enemy—but before his steamer entered the English Channel Colonel Ripley was dead of heart failure.

"Just plain excitement," Lady Ripley told me afterward. "He would not have been able to stand it, anyway. The war office would probably not have conducted the war as he wanted and he would have worried me to death."

So that was that, and Lady Ripley turned her attention to San. The lad's father left a will giving "everything of every sort of which I die possessed to my dear wife, Evelyn, knowing that she will in all things do what is wise and just for my son, Sanford Glenville Ripley, now at Clereston Vicarage, Medley, Hants."

"You must love your mother, Sanford," he had written his son, "you must be a man and put away childish things." *That* would mean the Bedlington pup! Again it seemed like the Trumpeter—must, must, *must!* Was there nothing soft, nothing gratuitous in life? Was it all to be *must?*

Certainly he was to find nothing soft in Aunt Evelyn.

They left Clereston Vicarage and went to the Ripley place on the Channel, Dene's Thorpe, and the Bedlington was also left behind. The boy was shy and easily dominated. The Trumpeter was now gone out of his life, but it seemed as if the Trumpeter's spirit had flown down from the roof and entered Lady Ripley's breast. Instead of being in awe of the brazen figure, he was now in awe of Lady Ripley. She got him

up in the morning, she dictated all his small, daytime activities, and, to her stenorian note, he went to bed at night.

Early she announced that he was to marry her niece, Kitty. To counterbalance this, the boy had announced—to himself only, however—that he would not.

"I am in an awful blue funk about it," he told me once later, "but I shan't marry Kitty. Aunt Ev promises all sorts of things if I do, but I have learned better than to expect her to do any of them. But I shan't, anyway. I am of age."

I had seen Kitty Clereston once, an embryo Trumpeter, I remember thinking, but I held my peace. There was the first budding of a plan in my brain, but I bided my time.

After that week-end at Dene's Thorpe I did not see the Ripleys for some days. I was busy getting my Colorado mining affairs into condition to manage themselves, so that I could play about in freedom, and for this purpose I left the place I had taken—Woodcroft, not far from Dene's Thorpe—and settled in the old flat in Jermyn Street. Britisher that I am, I must confess that business in London seemed very slow after so many years in the States, but at last things were in condition to leave and I could turn my attention to the plan I had for Sanford Ripley.

I wrote to Evelyn asking her to lend San to me for a fortnight. He came, radiant as a young knight. But I didn't flatter myself that it was because of my friendship. It was merely that he had got away from the Trumpeter for a bit.

Dorothy Madden had finished one leg of the cathedral tour and was glad to postpone the rest for the sake of a few days in town. The children were a great contrast. San was blond and two and twenty. Although the same age, Dorothy, because of her open frankness and self-reliance, seemed older. She was black-haired and slim, healthy and

outspoken and spoiled, as only the daughters of the middle rich of America are spoiled, a good sport who always played fair. I knew it would do San a world of good to know her sort. He was shy and sensitive, like all English boys, and especially shy of her, only at first, however. He took his cue from her and called me Uncle John and they were soon good pals. I, too, followed their example and began to renew my youth.

In those few days we did everything that audacious youth and doting fifty could suggest. Neither of them had ever seen the Tower. Dorothy, of course, had lived in the States, but San, six feet of blond Britisher, living all his life within a hundred miles of London, had never been up to town. Dorothy created a small riot at the entrance gate by refusing to give up her hand bag while inside. It was only my insistence and her desire to see the crown jewels that finally induced her to conform to the rules and she handed the bag over graciously, assuring the good-looking, blushing, young attendant that she would "cop" one of the jewels, just to get him into trouble.

San didn't like the Tower at all, any of it. He told me that the walls looked like Clereston Abbey and he was afraid he'd see the Trumpeter up above come to spoil his holiday.

We had excursions on the river and motoring, luncheons and shops, galleries and theaters, until I, for one, was ready to cry enough. I had made the young people happy, and myself, too, for the matter of that, but for all and all I was glad to greet the day to pack Dorothy off to Margot Dudley to finish her tour. I patted her hand for good-bye through the carriage window at Waterloo, pledging her for another visit soon, when she amazed me by pulling my head down to announce that I was to write her at once "every word San says about me when I am gone."

I smiled at her and stepped back to give the lad a chance for his farewells. Then the whistle blew and the train moved gently away.

San was silent as we taxied out of the station. But later, as we crossed the river, a golden glow in the low-hung, western sun, with the parliament building and Westminster piling up purple shadows beyond, he touched my arm.

"I am going to marry Dorothy Madden, Uncle John," he said very quietly.

"The devil you are!" I exploded. I hadn't expected things to move so swiftly.

"The devil I am! Just that."

"It takes two to make that bargain, my boy, maybe three," I added, as I thought of Lady Ripley.

"It takes just two, Uncle John," he replied with great dignity. "Dorothy and me. And *that* is settled."

"You haven't said anything to her, you young ass!" I was half angry at that prospect.

"No, sir, I haven't—and I am not a young ass. I am almost twenty-three, and I know what I am about."

Oh, youth! Oh, young love! My plan was running away with things. I hadn't hoped for so much. But I could not keep Lady Ripley out of my mind.

When the cab turned into Jermyn Street San leaped out to give me a hand. His face was radiant.

"What about Kitty in your new scheme of things?" I asked mischievously, poking him with my stick.

"Oh, Kitty? Why—why, you marry Kitty, yourself, if you like." He was wasting no thoughts on Kitty Clereston at this time and so, laughing, we went up the steps arm in arm.

I knew that when we went down to Hampshire in a few days I should find the country shimmering in its May loveliness, but I also knew that I should have the deuce of a row with Lady Ripley. Just as I foresaw, San went

to her as he had to me, and she was furious. She sent for me, peremptorily, and who was I to disobey?

"What is this you have done, mixing San up with that American girl?" she demanded. But Lady Ripley wasn't the only person in England with a devilish temper. I had not had a proper tea that day, nor yet a proper luncheon. Just let her attack Dorothy, and I was ready for her!

"And what, may I ask, Lady Ripley, have you against Miss Madden?"

"One hears things," she said vaguely, trying obviously to control her temper.

"Well, considering that I brought Dorothy Madden from the States, together with all there is to be known about her, I demand that you state plainly what you mean."

"How am I to know anything about her?"

"You have my word for it. You can see Dorothy herself, if you are not too prejudiced."

"I know all about her without seeing her. Brazen and loud, flaunting her American dollars and her American slang. Bah! They are all alike."

"Her father was a successful physician."

"Self-made, I suppose? And bombastic, like all the others."

"Perhaps," I answered, trying not to anger her too far. "But he was a courteous, kindly gentleman. Dorothy is beautiful and able, loyal and a credit to any country. Her only shortcoming in your eyes would be that she is an American."

"And doubtless glories in it, too, the poor thing! Well, even if she were as English as the princess royal, San should not marry her. It has always been understood that he would marry Kitty? She is mad about him, and, if you would only stop your meddling, it would be an ideal match."

"It would certainly keep the money

in the Clereston family, if that is what you mean."

"The money is in the Clereston family. The colonel left it to me. And I shall see that San marries Kitty."

"Unpleasant before pleasant" was in my mind, but I only inquired cheerfully, and rather by the way:

"Why hasn't San a motor car, Evelyn?"

"San? A motor—of his own, you mean?" She was plainly aghast.

"Yes, of his own. He is grown-up. All the youngsters——"

"He goes in my car when he wants to."

"Is he allowed to drive himself? Alone, I mean."

"In my car? Certainly not. I am not quite a fool."

"Well, you can get a roadster very cheaply. They are quite foolproof, now." I had got that expression from Dorothy, but I did not say so. "A little eight horse power."

"My car is seventy-two." She spoke with just pride. Oh, yes, Lady Ripley did herself very well in the matter of her car.

"Just nine times the horse power, probably nine times the cost, too," I murmured, as if I were thinking to myself. "But I feel I ought to tell you, Evelyn, that I believe that, with just that handicap, San is going to beat you to it."

"I will ask you to spare me any of your coarse American slang, John," said Lady Ripley, with dignity. "You forget that I can cut San off without a penny, if he——"

"Yes, I think the will said 'wise and just,' didn't it? That would be both! However, Dorothy has plenty in her own right and I have already made a will leaving everything of mine to her, anyway, although I am not sure it is always best for the woman of the family to hold the purse strings."

So you see, Lady Ripley and I did

have the deuce of a row, just as I expected.

The next day I motored over to Salisbury to see Dorothy and Mrs. Dudley, her chaperon. We talked only commonplaces as we strolled through the close and sat under the giant trees: of Dorothy's visit to London, the day on the river, the luncheon at the Pall Mall—not a word about Sanford Ripley. I arranged with Mrs. Dudley for them to come to Woodcroft for a fortnight in August and it was only as I was leaving that I leaned out of the car to whisper to Dorothy, asking her if she had liked San.

"Yes, a lot," she admitted frankly, and there was no blush staining her maiden cheek.

"Should you like to see him again?"

"Of course, silly. I mean to, what's more!"

And so it was that San got his roadster, but not by any means with the Ripley money.

I drove it down myself from London and up to the door of Dene's Thorpe with the horn going its wildest. San came bounding out to see the row.

"Take it, my boy. It's yours. Engine's going, tank's full of gas. Here's the receipt. Here's a license, driving license," I explained, thrusting the papers into his hand. "Dorothy will be glad to see you. She is at Winchester with Mrs. Dudley. Cut along now, before any one comes out to spoil the fun."

"Meaning the mater, I gather. Watch me go!" He climbed in eagerly and started, but put his foot on the brake long enough to stammer: "I say, Uncle John, it's ripping of you. I—I'd—oh, hang it all, you know what I want to say!"

"Certainly I know, I know. Start along now and I will go in and have another row with your mother."

But San was long since out of ear-

shot, his bare, blond head bronze in the sun.

I found Lady Ripley writing letters in the morning room, in full sight and hearing of all that had passed in the drive.

"Well, John," she said pleasantly as we shook hands, "I have been thinking over what you said and I have decided to allow San to have a car of his own."

"Oh, in that case, you owe me four hundred pounds, Evelyn, my dear. Also, for eight gallons of gas at three and six the gallon and three quarts of oil. I'll throw in the price of the license."

"You are a good business man. But I think I shall let it stand just as it is."

So that was that, and we went on to other matters.

I looked at my watch.

"Here I am stranded at half past three on a hot afternoon, just fourteen miles from home. I am getting a bit soft, Evelyn, and I fear a bit old. I don't feel up to walking to Woodcroft. Be a good girl and drive me home. Let's have tea at Woodcroft and plan the house party."

"A house party? You?"

"Yes, I. What do you think I took Woodcroft for? 'Fine old Georgian mansion in the midst of own grounds, gravel soil, lovely park and gardens, sunken gardens. Twenty-two bedrooms, fourteen dressing rooms, two baths, usual offices, hot and cold water laid on.' That's what the agent's catalogue said. I can't occupy twenty-two bedrooms, to say nothing of the two baths. I am going to have a house party. Come along with me and select your rooms, for you have no idea how many people I owe invitations to. I have visited around a lot since I came over."

"You must ask Kitty, John. She has so little gayety."

"Yes, bring Kitty and we will have the vicar up from Clereston. He can look out for Dorothy while——"

"Dorothy? She is to be there?"

"Surely, and Mrs. Dudley, her chaperon. And you are coming to get acquainted with them."

"I tell you once and for all time, John, San is going to marry Kitty."

"Evelyn, you are too foolish. Why do you think San is going to marry the first girl he sees? But don't let's argue that to-day. It's too hot. Besides, you have done me out of four hundred pounds, plus. But just to show you I bear no malice I am asking you to be my guest," I told her genially.

"You are a tiresome old meddler, John." Lady Ripley's voice was bitter, but she got out her motor car and drove me home. It was a superb car and as I saw how splendidly she drove it I did not wonder that she allowed no one else to touch it. I reflected as we purred along the winding, shady road that I had never liked and admired her so much as I had that day. For had I not just won one point over her? San had his roadster—she hadn't paid for it, to be sure—and I was determined that I should not lose the greater point. San should not marry Kitty without seeing a little of life before.

Time passed. I was settling down at Woodcroft. San drove over to see me when he could—Lady Ripley would not allow him gasoline and cut off his pocket money. I had advised him not to see much of Dorothy and to say nothing more of his love for her until they should all come to Woodcroft in August. For I felt sure that Lady Ripley could not live day by day with Dorothy's lovely face and the frank charm of her without capitulation.

Evelyn wanted to go up to London for Ascot week and a part of the season and I loaned her my flat in Jermyn Street. She dragged San up with her and he, poor chap, had to spend his days going about with Kitty to places that were sacred to him because he had first seen them with Dorothy.

Lady Ripley wrote me, in great elation, that San had settled down sensibly with no more nonsense. He and Kitty were inseparable—so congenial and happy. This in spite of my meddling. Meanwhile San, as he told me later, bore with patience Lady Ripley's calm triumph and Kitty's air of sure proprietorship, because he had Woodcroft and Dorothy to look forward to.

They lingered on in town, although it was frightfully hot, until it was time to come to me at Woodcroft. The other guests were all there. The Venables and the Candons from Surrey, Mrs. Dudley and Dorothy, even the vicar from Clereston. Shy and gentle he was, the greatest possible contrast to his masterful sister.

Just before the Ripleys were expected Dorothy came to me in great distress.

"Tom Venable says Kitty has never had a beau, Uncle John."

"Well, what of it? Lots of girls haven't."

"Lots of girls, your grandmother!" Dorothy retorted, with the breeziness of American youth. She was certainly having no respect for my gray hairs. "Why can't you give her a rush, Uncle John?"

"I? Why, Dorothy, my dear!" It was plain she was going to be too much for me.

"Yes, you! You're an eligible bachelor, and it's a shame."

But when I absolutely refused she decided Tom would have to be sacrificed.

"I'll give him that Airedale pup of yours," she announced. "He's crazy to have it."

"Oh, you will, eh? Why is it necessary, may I ask?"

"Because it's Tom. Any of the boys at home would do it for nothing, just to be sporting and to give her a good time, too, but Tom is a pig. He's got to be bribed."

7—Ains.

So Dorothy, in spite of my counsel, arranged with Tom Venable to strike up an immediate and vigorous flirtation with Kitty Clereston, partly because Kitty had never had any attention and it was a disgrace, and partly to leave San clear for Dorothy, though I have no doubt that Dorothy would have managed that quite well, in any case.

We were having tea on the shady lawn when Evelyn's car purred in from the blinding sunshine of the road outside. Evelyn was driving, with Kitty beside her, while San was behind, joggled on either side by the baggage.

"We had a hot trip," said Evelyn, fanning herself daintily. "The sun was in our faces all the way. It was hard driving, even with the top up."

Kitty looked warm and dusty in her brown-lace frock, which was most unbecoming to her muddy complexion. She continued to hang on San's arm after he had helped her down. But Tom cut in and San slipped off, directly under his stepmother's eyes, to Dorothy, standing cool and fair in white-silk sports skirt and sweater, a cruel contrast to Kitty's hot browns.

"Good heavens!" groaned Tom, under cover of getting them tea. "I'd forgotten what she looked like. She is a fright. Her feet are as big as her nose."

"You don't get that Airedale, Tom —" I began.

"Oh, I'm game. Watch me!" And off he dashed, a teacup in either hand and, good sport that he was, he laid siege to both Kitty and Lady Ripley, fending every one else off, and finally carried Kitty off to the stables to see the Airedale pup "Uncle John had promised him."

We had a quiet evening; every one was ordered to bed early in preparation for the next night when I had asked, a score of old friends to dinner and a dance in the huge billiard room. I was going about rounding them all up when

I found Lady Ripley peering into the shadows of the park.

"I'm looking for San," she explained quite frankly.

"I'll find him and send him in at once. You go in." And I shoosed her to the house.

I found San, as I expected—and Lady Ripley, too, I think—in the garden with Dorothy.

"Don't spoil everything in the beginning, San," I warned him, after sending Dorothy to the summerhouse to wait for me. "Take it slowly."

"Take it slowly, after the time I've had in town? I haven't had one minute to myself; Kitty, Kitty, morning, noon, and night! But I shan't give in. I'm going to marry Dorothy," he said determinedly. "I told her so just now."

"Well, you're wasting no time." I was plainly aghast at his news. "But I warn you to say nothing to your mother now. I have a special reason. I know she will love Dorothy if you'll only give her the opportunity. Don't antagonize her now."

After promising, San went leaping up the steps of the terrace, two at a time, to seek out his stepmother.

In the summerhouse Dorothy threw herself into my arms, sobbing, partly from joy, partly from sheer nerves.

"Oh, Uncle John, *do* you think it will be all right? Are you glad? Weren't you surprised? Isn't San wonderful?"

"Never more surprised in my life, my dear," I lied, as I patted her shoulder. "And of course I am glad."

"But Lady Ripley— Will she——"

"Lady Ripley is very tired to-night, Dorothy. I have made San promise to say nothing to her or any one for the present. You must promise to do the same, my dear, except to Mrs. Dudley, of course. Remember, you are years older than San in everything but actual years, for, while you've been playing about with boys all your life, San has never known any girl but Kitty. Now

run off to bed. To-morrow is the dance and you must look your prettiest and freshest for all our sakes," I finished with old-fashioned solicitude.

I knew I should have another, and a worse, row with Evelyn Ripley when the whole thing came out, but I felt safe for the present. I went to bed, blindly hoping to avert the scene until after the dance. But had I foreseen all the events that were to transpire in the next thirty-six hours, I should not have slept a wink.

After what I ignorantly supposed was a pleasant breakfast next morning, the storm broke.

Mrs. Dudley, that usually calm and tranquil woman, came to me in distress.

Tom Venable brought Dorothy to me in tears of vexation.

Lady Ripley came to me in a towering rage. She, urged on by Kitty, had become suspicious; said she had seen Dorothy give San a "look" at breakfast, and had later bearded him in his dressing room, where he was preparing for a set of tennis with Tom and the girls.

San, goaded and bullied beyond endurance, had struck back: told her all he had meant to keep secret, "spilled the beans," as Tom Venable put it. And Lady Ripley, in a frenzy of anger and frustrated hope, had childishly locked San in his room.

Then she had sought out Dorothy, innocently waiting by the tennis courts with Tom and Kitty. Dorothy, conscious of the secret she was keeping, blushed and stammered when Lady Ripley bore down upon her.

"She—she's a cat, Uncle John," Dorothy said, in telling me the events. "We had a teacher just like her at school, once. Always coming down on the girls. I could manage her with one hand, and I could Lady Ripley——"

"Remember, Dorothy, she is San's mother." I spoke sharply.

"Well, that wouldn't stop me for a

minute, if she weren't your guest," she said with sweet graciousness. "She—she took advantage of that, too. But I wasn't frightened. I was only ashamed. *Me*, to be fighting over a man!" Her eyes blazed. "And, after all I have tried to do for that awful Kitty, she stood there and laughed, watching it all. Oh, poor San! To have to marry her! But his mother said she would make him do it. Tom Venable pulled me away or I should have died."

Dorothy was so angry and so incoherent that I turned to Mrs. Dudley.

"How can Lady Ripley bear to live after doing this dreadful thing?" she said immediately. "To go to the child all alone, before those others, and accuse her of entangling San! If she had anything to say, why didn't she speak to me, or to you?"

"Evelyn Ripley is a brute, my dear," I answered her with conviction. "I've got to see her at once." And I left her. I found Evelyn livid with anger.

"Evelyn, how could you——" I was beginning.

"It is time some one did something to set matters right, John Warde," she came back at me. "What right have you to interfere in my private affairs as you have? You have meddled from that first day at Dene's Thorpe, and ever since then San has been disrespectful."

"If you had not behaved like a brute to San all his life, he wouldn't be disrespectful."

"Oh, he has complained, has he?"

"San has no need to complain. It is patent to all the world how you bully him."

"I know what I am saving him from. This girl, now, she is like all the others. My second parlor maid lived with some Amer——"

"Lady Ripley listening to servant's gossip? Never did I expect to hear it! I have told you all there is to know about Dorothy Madden, and I maintain she is quite worthy of San or of any

other Ripley—or Clereston, either, for the matter of that. But I don't want to quarrel with you, Evelyn. Heaven knows I have tried to have a pleasant party and you have done your best to spoil it. It is futile to argue further. We're getting nowhere."

In the end she agreed to call a truce until after the dance. Then she declared she would take San and Kitty home. She went up to release San from his prison. Mrs. Dudley promised for herself and Dorothy to ignore what had transpired and to go on as if all were serene. Fortunately, the Venables and Candons were old friends, and, knowing Evelyn Ripley's bullying capacity, they kept their opinions to themselves and studiously heard and saw nothing.

It was only the old vicar who would not. Shy and sensitive soul though he was, he got up a goodish bit of feeling and left on the noon train for Clereston Vicarage, declaring that he was all for San and Dorothy, and that he never could stay in peace under the same roof with his dreadful sister.

Luckily, I had sent down to Dene's Thorpe for San's roadster to surprise him upon his arrival. It proved a great boon for him that day, for he had some quiet hours, oiling and polishing the car, safe, in the company of three chauffeurs, from invasion by Evelyn. Outwardly, at least, we were at peace once more.

Woodcroft had, I am sure, never looked lovelier than on that evening. Every one did his part. We had a splendid dinner, the floors were perfect, and I had ordered down from London both music and caterers, Calli's best. Terraces and sunken gardens were flooded with moonlight, an ideal setting for happy hearts.

Dorothy slipped her hot hand in mine. Pride had come to her rescue; she was indeed a good sport. Her dark head was held high and her flushed cheeks needed no rouge. I remember thinking

that she looked like a wise young angel in her white dress and the silver leaves about her brow. I could not forbear contrasting her with Kitty, to the distinct disadvantage of the latter.

During the early evening my duties as host kept me busy, but I could see that Dorothy and San, through sheer embarrassment, carefully avoided each other, nor, on the other hand, would San dance with Kitty. 'Tom Venable had his capable hands full there.

"She dances like a house boat," he whispered to me once, under cover of straightening my tie. San and Dorothy had partners for every dance and at times strolled in the moonlight, and each, without appearing to look, always knew exactly where to find the other.

Half an hour before supper I had stolen a few minutes in the smoking room to get my breath when Tom's head popped in. He came in, shut the door, and leaned, breathless, against it.

"I've looked everywhere for you, Uncle John," he panted. "The old girl has busted loose again!"

"What?" I shouted, leaping to my feet.

"Yes. She's going to announce Kitty's engagement to San at supper. Can you beat it? You'll have to put the brakes on somehow, strangle her or drown her. Pater and I'll help—*only do it!*"

Evelyn defied me to my face, when at length I found her.

"I am tired of this nonsense, John Warde. We shall see who is master in my affairs. Kitty is mortified by San's treatment of her to-night. It's disgraceful! I shall put an end to it. I told him a few minutes ago what he could expect. After all, San at least is a gentleman and he will not back out after it is announced. Now send him to me, will you? It is almost time for supper and we must sit at the same table, we three."

But search as we would there was no

trace of San. Tom came in to report that his car was not in the garage.

Mrs. Dudley came to me with troubled eyes. Dorothy was not to be found, but she had left a note for her saying that Lady Ripley had driven them to it. They were going to Clereston Vicarage to be married. The vicar had volunteered that morning to help them get a special license. Wily old vicar! They had just had him on the telephone to say they were coming, and he was waiting to marry them.

"Have some one get me through on the telephone to my brother, John." Lady Ripley gave orders like a general in a battle. There was no doubt that she could intimidate her brother, even by telephone, if she used that voice.

"Clereston Vicarage does not answer," the footman reported, after some delay. Clever old vicar!

With something like a snort, Lady Ripley sent a maid for her cloak.

"You come with me, John. You can bring that brazen hussy back in San's car. Have some one stay by the telephone and tell the operator we *must* get through to Clereston. When they get him tell my brother that I positively forbid him to marry them and that I am on my way to the vicarage. But you can be back here before any one misses you, and you can tell your guests what you please about me when you return. My car can easily overtake them," she finished.

"Nine to one!" I groaned to myself, but I remembered, also, the day I had told Evelyn that, with even that handicap, I would back San to win.

I left the orders Lady Ripley had issued and privately urged Mrs. Dudley and the Venables to keep the music going and to keep our absence as secret as possible—and, above all, to prevent Kitty's talking.

"Oh, don't you worry! I'll dance her feet off. I'll give her the rush of her life!" said Tom, as we started.

I shall never forget that moonlight ride in Evelyn Ripley's car. She sat beside me, silent, her bare hand and large forearm white on the wheel. The corner of my eye caught the glitter of the gems in her hair, but I dared look no farther around, fearing to attract her attention to my unhappy self. I wanted no more of the vials of her wrath emptied upon my head.

We skirted Salisbury, the cathedral spire on our left, with the downs rippling off to the right and behind us, to Salisbury Plain. As a safe pastime I kept my eye on the tower, the loftiest in England, and wondered, as always, at the daring of its builder. Then came the thought of the daring of our young people to-night—they who had so recently been children.

We struck into the main road at East Harnham and on down for ten miles to Fordingbridge, peering ahead always; I, for one, dreading to see the small roadster scuttling before us. After we crossed the Avon on the seven-arched bridge we went straight on and I did not notice Evelyn's error until I recognized Godshill. "Good, we are off the road!" But I said it only to myself.

But Evelyn, too, saw her mistake in another moment.

"I suppose it's too much to expect that you would put me right, John. You haven't played fair in this whole business!"

Back to Fordingbridge we went and at the seven-arched bridge we got the southbound road again and had the moonlit little Avon on the west. Evelyn attended strictly to her driving. What thoughts were in her mind I neither know nor ever shall. As for me, I was glad of silence and pretended an interest in our passage through the isolated groups of pines, offshoots from the New Forest. We had, too, occasional glimpses of the moonlit river at Ibsley and Ringwood and from Sopley we ran beside it all the way to Winkton.

I was thinking of the chance we had left behind and of the faithful efforts of the Venables to carry it off, when my attention was suddenly attracted by red lanterns and an exclamation from Evelyn, and I woke to the realization that the road was in process of being rebuilt. An aged watchman stood swinging a red light to forbid our passage.

"It is Lady Ripley's car—Lady Ripley driving," she said with authority.

"I am very sorry, your ladyship. But it's my orders."

"Would it be possible to get through—if it were not for your orders, I mean?" I asked, hoping to prolong the delay.

"Oh, yes, sir, by careful driving, but there's some deep places. I've turned every one back. My orders, sir. I can't be responsible. I'm sorry, sir."

"Have you noticed, within the last hour or so, a small car with a young man driving?" The question was Evelyn's.

"Yes, madam. I turned him back, too," he replied, with a wave of the hand to the east. "Young lady, bareheaded, with him. Not more than forty minutes ago. That the one? Driving quite fast, he was."

"How far is it to Clereston Village, going that way?" Evelyn asked.

"Twenty miles, your ladyship, if you go by way of——"

"It's our only chance," she whispered to me, as if I were in league with her. "Twenty miles that way and they've the start of us; only five this."

The poor old watchman had barely time to pull his toes back to safety as the car leaped past him. Aisles of poles were lashed together to guide us through a narrow lane, bordered by red lanterns, with the deep blackness of ditches beyond.

We had gone perhaps a mile, slowly, carefully—it was wonderful to watch Evelyn's superb driving and to see the

beautiful car respond to her strong hand—when, with a sudden, sharp swerve and a burst of speed, I felt the car going over—down. There was a cry from Evelyn, a stinging pain in my shoulder, blackness.

Some time later I felt a pain in my head. Lanterns flashed in my face. There was an ugly odor of stimulants and a pain in my arm. Constables. The sense of being lifted in the darkness. The choke of brandy, a pain in my head, shouted orders. But finally, through it all, I struggled to myself and found that the disturbed earth had given way under our weight and the car had plunged twenty feet sheer and lay, badly smashed and partly turned over, with Lady Ripley dead against the wheel.

When I finally reached Clereston Vicarage in a hired car the moon had set in the west, the night was over, but the house was still alight. The vicar was not surprised to see me, but was visibly pleased that I had come too late. The children were already married.

I explained as briefly as I might that I had had an accident, and made light of my bandaged arm. I sent Dorothy

off to the vicar's study to telephone Mrs. Dudley and to tell her that I would speak to her directly. Then I took San and the vicar out into the garden to tell them of the accident.

"Poor Aunt Evelyn," said San simply. "I am glad that it all happened so quickly that she could not know she had failed."

Dorothy came to the vicarage door, with the hall lights pouring upon her as she peered out to find us. She looked sweet and girlish in her simple, white, dancing frock, which had been her wedding gown, and the silver leaves were still about her brow.

"Poor Kitty," she said, when we had told her as gently as we could. "We must be good to her, San. She has lost her best friend."

And up above us, to the east, on the sloping roof of the Monk's Chapel, outlined against the morning sky, stood the Trumpeter of the Dawn. One hand was outstretched, as if for silence over all the pleasant valley of the Arde, while he heralded for me—for Lady Ripley—and for San and Dorothy, the coming of a new day.

HAVING removed wrinkles by the latest method for performing such miracles, straightened the nose, imparted a permanent wave to the straightest hair, plucked the eyebrows to the approved narrow line, fashionable Parisiennes have turned their attentions to the eyelashes. The adjective "silky" may now be applied literally to the eyelashes of many women. For quite recently madame has undergone the painful operation of having long lashes of silk sewed to her eyelids. These silken lashes take permanent root after several weeks, leaving no scars to betray to the world the secret of their origin.

OF interest to women is the fascinating collection of artistic handicrafts on display in the Museum of the American Indian, recently opened in New York City. In this amazing collection are to be found examples of weaving, carving, beadwork, basketry, handmade jewelry, and pottery of astonishing beauty.

The cases contain necklaces, earrings, and bracelets of bird bone, and beads of clay, silver, copper, and even of pebbles, attractively combined and made into unique ornaments. Among them is a glittering headdress of blue beetles' wings which rivals the latest creations of Parisian milliners.



The White Shadow

By Izola Forrester

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"The Feast of Lights," etc.



THE coming of Princess Vara Saranov to Keddesley Hills had been a source of embarrassment and intense interest to the exclusive colony which had made this sector of Long Island its own during September and October.

The paramount query in the minds of Keddesley women was how she would expect to be received. Would she believe that any one had forgotten the international court scandal that had tainted her divorce and expulsion from court two years previous? Would she attempt to force the social issue in any way? Above all, had she come to Broadmoor deliberately, knowing that Bob Seton was putting up at the Keddesley country club, not four miles away, after both had tacitly kept half a world apart since he had been named correspondent in her husband's case?

She had taken over Broadmoor, the Sloane Morgan estate, which had been closed since Elsie Morgan's departure for Paris. There had been no preliminary warning of Vara's intent, merely the unannounced arrival of her small retinue of foreign servants at the quiet little hill station in the heart of the woods, and the renovation of the stately

stone house that crowned a wide plateau of golf links, polo grounds, and terraced Italian gardens.

A week later, as Seton himself was riding in the early morning, a large, gull-gray limousine had slipped past him over the hill drives, as unostentatiously as a battleship in a dawn mist, and with quite as much menace for him. Just for an instant he had seen the woman inside the car, wrapped to her ears in furs against the chill of the early morning, her eyes a flashing memory as they saw him, widely apart, dark, startlingly large in her white face that had once reminded him of a vagrant line he had read in a love lyric of the East:

"Like jasmynes lifted to the moon."

All the old, blurred, maddening mystery had possessed him at sight of her. Since then he had been doing relief, food-commission work in Poland, Silesia, later down into Livonia. Four years before, during the winter, he had met Vara Hoyt in New York, while she had been the guest of Elsie Morgan, a slim, aloof girl, blond hair worn in close, peasantlike braids about her head, her lashes and brows darker than her eyes, her lips betraying a sensitive, reticent nature.

She was the daughter of Patterson Hoyt, minister to Russia at one time. He had died suddenly, and his widow, Mary Willoughby Hoyt, had married Prince Alexis of Livonia, a Balkan hanger-on of royal opportunity, who found himself baffled by old Hoyt's American will, which gave Vara the bulk of his fortune.

It had been an intriguing revenge to marry the girl to one of his own intimates, when she had returned to Paris after eight years spent with her grandmother in Boston and New York. To understand why Mary Hoyt, her mother, had permitted the union, one had merely to glimpse back to the state of society women's minds when Mary was a girl. Igor Saranov was own brother to the Queen of Livonia after the war had shifted the cards with replaced royalties. Mary believed that she had done the best she could for her girl, and had returned to Boston to find the ways of peace after Alexis had faced his finish at Monastir.

A year later, when Seton had reached Jörn to establish food stations, he had suddenly met Vara face to face. She had stretched out her hands to him with one quick cry of gladness and relief.

"Gee, but it's great to find you here!" he had said fervently. "You ought to be back home, though, not here, in this forlorn country."

"I must stay. You know that I am—married, don't you?"

Her voice had held for him a strange note of appeal, even as her eyes, too, held some new shadow of regret. He told her he had only heard vaguely, that he had been tied up in Poland on relief work. And then he had seen the royal insignia on the door of her waiting car, the garb of her driver, dull purple and gold.

"I married Prince Saranov," she said gravely. And his eyes had held only pity for her, pity and a quick, relentless questioning of her happiness.

Yet, he told himself, even now, what right had he to resent it? There had never been words of love between them. He had only met her two or three times at the Morgans'. How could he know that she, too, had felt the strange, resistless undertides of attraction drawing them together against the direct, ordered trend of her life?

The letter from Elsie Morgan had been the main factor bringing him to Keddesley Hills. She had been, frank in admitting her own reason for letting Vara have Broadmoor: the chance hope of bringing them together. But another twist had come up unexpectedly, taking the situation out of her power.

I told her to remain at Broadmoor as long as she was happy (she wrote). She cannot remain in the shadow all her life, Bob, for the damnable act of one man. And the years of the war have made us all more pliable. Love has become more precious, more omnipotent in its rights, since we have all realized the uncertainty of human life. I want you and Vara to rise beyond the past and claim your own. It is ridiculous to let this old scandal separate you any longer. Who cares, after all? It was all whispered hearsay.

But this is why I am writing you: I ran across Cherry Sloane and her party last night. She wanted Broadmoor last spring and I wouldn't have her there. She's a stirrer-up of fires. Whether because of this, or of her feeling toward you, she has annexed Prince Saranov and is bringing him back with her to Keddesley as Exhibit A. I fancy. Vara does not know of this. And I am like any other fool woman who has tried to knit a strip out of Clotho's wool and made a mess of it. I am afraid that Cherry will annoy Vara. Women are petty devils when it comes to idle intrigue, and she was very partial to you, my dear. I shall be back the first week in November.

The evening of the princess' arrival Seton had called up Broadmoor to ask if she would see him.

"Why not?" She had spoken to him with the same grave hesitancy, he remembered. "You are the first friend who has found me. I shall be most glad to see you."

He found her lingering over coffee and cigarettes, a slim, solitary figure before the open fireplace, her gown of fur-bordered velvet the color of the dark, Malaga grapes in the high, copper bowl behind her. The short, plump, Russian maid served them both, moved the inlaid, olivewood box of cigarettes close to his elbow, and left them alone together.

"How did you know that I was here?" Her gaze met his serenely; her tone was controlled and easy.

"I saw you this morning when you arrived. I was riding along the east road when your car passed."

"So wonderful of you to think of me, to recognize me like that—at a glance," she murmured.

"It's only two years——"

She shifted her glance from his compelling eyes, smiling slowly at the fire. Two years. Was it indeed only two years, she thought, since that single night that had caught her all unawares, in its net of court intrigue, and left her adrift in the dark?

As Seton spoke to her casually of other things, mutual friends, all he had himself been engaged in, she could see face after face appear in the curling, flamelit smoke. Dagmar first, the little Russian archduchess, half Danish through some distant cousinship to the old queen. Perhaps that had been where she got her extreme fairness of skin and hair, with the black, Slav eyes, like those of Kasha, the maid, aslant and wary. She had smiled rarely, and after the war had shuffled the cards of thrones and royal favors; young Paul Alexandrovitch of Serbia, Dagmar's husband, had been made king of Livonia.

Then Igor, the queen's brother. His face came back to her, the peculiar, square-shaped head, closely cut, dark hair that came to a curved point above his forehead, the dark, unwinking eyes that had always reminded her of a cer-

tain pony she had dreaded to ride as a girl, because it showed the whites of its eyes around the iris.

Lastly, Nadenko, fencing master to the little Prince Michel. There had been one enlightening morning shortly after Igor had brought her to Jörn, the new capital of Livonia. He had left her with his sister, while he rejoined the king at the front. The long, pink-walled studio of Nadenko shaped out of the smoke: huge, velvet cushions thrown against the wall; a skylight painted in fantastic, futurist figures; Nakendo himself, tall, lithe, lean, with his brilliant eyes and restless hands forever displacing things, his voice rising, sharply metallic, as he directed the little, pale prince. And Dagmar, a silhouette in black, white fur at wrists and throat, her eyes following the Russian in his supple maneuvers.

What had there been in all this, she asked herself, to involve her in its elements of tragedy, and why, of them all, had she alone been followed by the white shadow of unproven guilt?

She became aware that Seton had ceased speaking, that he was watching her with unguarded eyes.

"I came to-night to ask you if you'd rather I would go away." He said the words deliberately, with an effort betraying reluctance.

"Go away? No, certainly not. Why should you?" She glanced up at him with quick dread. He handed her Elsie Morgan's letter in silence. After she had read it she laid it on the Algerian table cover between them, not meeting his eyes, tracing, instead, half unconsciously the delicate pattern of gold on the embossed, old-rose leather. So this was the finale, she thought, with relief. By a trick of Time, the juggler, the last living actors in the drama at Jörn were to meet in this sequestered, peaceful section of rich estates, with the chance jealousy of Cheridah Sloane acting as Fate's leverage.

A revulsion of feeling swept over her with a shiver, at the thought of seeing Igor Saranov again. For the instant she felt that she could not stay, that, at all hazards, she must go before the fear became a reality.

Then a queer, dogged pride asserted itself, a flashback to old Patterson Hoyt, who had held his seat through shifting politics back home and Continental diplomacy. Why should she be disturbed, she asked herself, why be unnerved, when she was innocent? How many times had she told herself the old Japanese proverb, "Thine own heart makes thy world." Where was her inner strength, her courage that had carried her through the Jörn crisis, that she should seek to escape now from a situation planted by one woman's casual jealousy?

Jealousy, she smiled to herself, asking what Cheridah Sloane could find to be jealous of in the relations of Seton and herself. Jealousy of this man sitting near her, who had never spoken one single word of love to her, between whom and herself there had never been one endearment, one revelation of love, nothing at all but—what?

She dared not meet his eyes, even while she questioned herself, and the demand was thrown back to her innermost consciousness. Could she truthfully tell herself that Bob Seton was nothing to her, when she realized beyond any quibbling or subterfuge that he was the one man out of the whole world whose very presence roused her, who held her interest against all limitations of time or space, whom she missed most out of her life?

He was speaking to her quietly, calling her back to reality.

"I am not going away from Keddesley. I do not think you should be left unprotected, while Saranov is here. If you need me, call or send word to the country club."

He was ignoring the letter they had

both read, with its frank acknowledgment of what life might mean for them. What had Elsie written? Her eyes glanced at the open page and found the lines that had so held her in the reading.

Love has become more precious, more omnipotent in its rights, since we have all realized the uncertainty of human life. I want you and Vara to rise beyond the past and claim your own.

"You will do this, won't you, Vara?"

"Gladly." She smiled back at him dreamily. "How strange it is, the room that night at Nadenko's—like some vague subconscious memory of another life, isn't it?—here it seems so secure. That was why I came; it seemed secluded and free here, a place where I could relax and find myself. And now—this. It makes one superstitious, the way we are all brought together here. Once, in traveling through a mountain pass in Roumania, our car suddenly pitched and skidded. There were four of us in it, Dagmar, Paul, Igor, and myself. I remember at that moment, when death seemed inevitable, I felt no alarm or excitement, merely a curious speculation. I looked at each of their faces and wondered which of us would die. So now. Surely there is some intent to this, even if we blame it on chance, unseen forces beyond control."

"I have never believed much in that sort of thing." Seton rose to leave, his tone steady and under control, his eyes meeting hers half defiantly, as they had that day in Jörn when she had told him of her marriage. "I think occasion can be made the weapon of our needs. I cannot say much to you, Vara, except that my life is at your service. I thought it would make things safer for you if I kept my distance, so to speak. I think you must always have known—"

"I know." She stretched her hand out to him, not impulsively, with surrender, but gravely, gratefully. "You have been nearer to me through the

years than even now at your club, Bob, always near."

But with the passing days of the next few weeks there was borne in on her vividly how utterly equivocal her position was, so far as Keddesley opinion was concerned. Except for the half-veiled innuendo of a society weekly's gossip column, her presence at Broadmoor was not even noticed.

Most strongly was her ostracism emphasized after the arrival, in October, of Cheridah Sloane and her house-party guests at a near-by country house. Prince Saranov became the marked figure at every social affair in the Hills and surrounding country. Not merely because he was the latest favorite of Cherry Sloane, but because of his own personality. He was a picturesque aftermath of defunct royalty, with his little entourage, chef, valet, secretary, and Nadenko, the fencing master. It amused Cherry to have such a personage in her home, to exhibit him as she once had a black cheetah she had brought from India. But Nadenko baffled her with his inscrutable smile and perfect comprehension of feminine tactics.

"I don't like him, Igor," she said plaintively. "He is frightfully analytical when he stares at you, like a Gila monster exactly. I hate him, dear. He sees right through me."

"I retain him for sentimental reasons," Igor explained, with his curt, aloof manner. "He was attached to the royal household before the catastrophe of 1919. He is a marvelous fencer, the artist and the master, too." You will observe how I can disarm him. It soothes my ruffled ego that I can do this."

It was from Nadenko that he learned of Vara's presence in Keddesley Hills. Cherry had decided to turn the billiard room at the top of the house into a fencing studio, to amuse her guests. Here Nadenko, given *carte blanche*, had

reproduced as far as possible the interior of his old Jörn studio. Squatted on the floor beside a new case of foils, he ran long, nicotine-stained finger tips along the blades.

"The princess is living six miles from here at the Morgan place," he said, as if to himself, musingly, speculatively. Igor wheeled about on his heel, his brows in a pointed frown.

"Why has she come here? To annoy me, to embarrass me?"

"She is still very beautiful." Nadenko ignored his queries. "I have the truth from the servants here. Your Sloane woman failed to establish an affair between herself and Seton. She sets the stage here now to get revenge on the woman he loves—your wife. He lives at the country club, and sees her."

Igor's figure lifted on its toes, tense, threatening, his eyes rounded with hate. Nadenko laughed unpleasantly, eying him over one shoulder.

"You regret? Well, she is alive, at least. What have I?"

That evening after dinner Cheridah missed her guest of honor. A black-and-silver coupé slipped around the curving, hill roads into Broadmoor, stopping in the moon-thrown shadow of the pillared porch at the side entrance.

Saranov sent the announcement of his arrival to his former wife without warning or apology, but even he was unprepared for the measure of indifference with which she met him. Admitted by Kasha to the upper living room, his eyes covered her beauty with one full glance of appreciation, as he bowed to the waist. He took in the tone of her surroundings, with lifted brows of amusement. Cream and gold, the boudoir of Sévigné, not of Montespan. Books, an ivory-tinted piano with Watteau panels, a couch of jonquil tapestry and gold rococo, a gilded footstool with a slumbering, yellow Persian cat on its cushion. Lastly, Vara herself, the one vivid note of color in the room, her

blond hair and dark eyes accentuated by the robe of Cairene velvet, shot with gold thread, which she wore.

A little smile came to her close lips as she heard his explanation of why he had come.

"Why should my being here affect you at all, Igor? I did not even know you were expected as a guest of the Sloanes until three weeks ago. I never go out in society. I can assure you that you are absolutely safe."

"Safe? I? What do you mean?" he demanded. "What do I care? I have nothing to protect myself from, but it creates an embarrassing situation for others, for my friends and my hostess, your being here. Old scandals are putrid. This particular one——"

She stopped him with a gesture.

"You have not learned to face truth even now, have you? Why do you pretend to me? It is over. Why lie any longer? Dagmar is gone with the others. You knew that night why she was there. You deliberately sacrificed me to save your sister. The queen can do no wrong! Paul was the only one fooled. You knew you were perfectly safe. Nadenko loved Dagmar. He would have killed Paul, rather than ruin her name. You three had a bond of understanding between you, and you stood together. Don't think for one moment that I did not know the truth."

"You!" He stared back at her, with growing anger in his wide, menacing eyes. "Was I not the fool? Do you not think that I could see for myself—you and that Seton? If there was nothing between you, why did you dare to bring in another to endanger Dagmar? You stand there and accuse me"—he moved nearer, his clenched hands tightening, jamming in rage as she still smiled—"you dare to judge my sister when every thought you had was evil toward this man. I tell you now——"

Serene and contemptuous, she met his eyes.

"Will you leave quietly, or must I call for help? I will have no more scenes, Igor?"

"Call, if you like. I remain." He seated himself deliberately in the wing armchair by the open fire. "I have come with one purpose in view. I will not leave until it is fulfilled."

"You are not in Livonia now." Her glance challenged him to reach her.

"I forbid you to see Seton. I will not be made ridiculous before my friends, you hear?"

Her silence held its own answer. She found no words to meet his sudden threat, only a leaping gladness in her heart that his hate could not take from her Seton's faith.

"If you two dare to revive and flaunt your affair here——"

"I have said there never was anything between us."

"Then I will kill him. I must uphold my honor even in this damnable country."

"Why have you come to this damnable country?" Her voice held cool assurance. "What special loot have you overlooked that may have drifted here?"

"You!" His voice lowered to the guttural. Against her will, as she saw the creeping shadow of desire in his eyes, she felt the old, sickening dread of him. "I worshiped Dagmar. I would have sacrificed anything in God's world for her as I did you, the woman whom I loved. So sacred have I held her that even now I befriend Nadenko, as I would a dog she had protected. Crowns and thrones vanish and form again like cloud shapes. Dagmar is gone with Paul, but I am here to-day, myself, alive, and I find I cannot gaze upon your beauty without desire ruling my reason still. You—you are a fool not to sense your own power!" His tone was low-pitched, unsteady, vibrant with warning to her of old moods awakening. "You American women are too obvious. You lack subtlety. Else you would

enjoy, as I do, this situation to-night. Tell me one thing, and I will go. Do I lie when I say that in your heart you had been unfaithful with this man as surely as Dagmar ever played with Nadenko?"

"I was absolutely faithful to you, Igor, even though I hated you." She held her nerves steady, under control, her mind with Seton, beating its wings like a frightened bird at nearing danger.

"So? You hated me!" He laughed as he rose leisurely. "I retain very pleasant memories of those hours of hate. You were the tortured wife, no doubt." He glanced about him with satisfaction and surety. "How long do you purpose remaining here?"

She moved her hand toward the push button at the edge of the table. Before she could touch it his hand closed on her wrist, the other arm about her shoulders, holding her helpless.

"You will not answer? Then I take my answer." He kissed her strained face with a passion that held cruelty, and released her. "Madame, I beg to wish you au revoir." He bowed and passed quietly out of the room, closing the paneled door noiselessly after one last word to the woman who stood with her back to him, her fingers gripping the table's edge, her eyes closed. "Again I suggest that you do not see Seton again."

Her letter reached Seton the following morning, brief, poignant. He read between its lines, his teeth clenched on his pipestem, his eyes narrowed. She could not stay at Broadmoor. She was leaving the next day, possibly sailing later for Egypt, anywhere out of Saranov's immediate zone.

I do not care about myself. I think I have experienced the limit of his deviltry. But I don't want him to involve you. He came here last night threatening me if we met again. Absurd, isn't it?—if it were not also tragic, for I know him. So—good-by. I thought myself strong, and here I am crying like any other woman,

absorbed in self-pity, when it might have been so much worse for us both. Supposing it had been true, and now I was turning to Egypt to give you freedom. Surely we hold the better part, my dear, my very dear.

When he tried to reach her on the phone, he was told the princess could not be disturbed. Riding the circling paths and roads about Broadmoor, he hoped to meet her in the car, but only encountered the station express truck loaded with trunks. She was keeping her word and leaving. Each way his mind turned ended in a blind alley. Why should he not follow her, he thought bitterly. What use was life without her through the oncoming years? She was free to marry in certain localities, others would withhold the privilege from the guilty party in the divorce suit. Guilty? Saranov's record on the Continent recurred to him grimly, the man who had broadcasted his wife's dishonor almost with pride, when he knew he lied.

Over and over, throughout the dragging hours of the day, Seton pictured the scenes at Jörn until he found the full force of his suspicion pivoting on Nadenko. He had never talked with Vara about the truth of that night. She had said the queen was in great danger. Would he accompany her to save Dagmar? He had placed his own interpretation on the scene in the studio, when he heard Vara pleading with the white-faced queen to leave at once, and had caught the look that flashed between Dagmar and Nadenko. It was as if they weighed at the instant the measure of their love against the destiny of thrones. If he could reach the fencing master and force him now to reveal the truth! If the man had his price, there was a bare chance of persuading him to confess. This, or Saranov, himself. What leverage could be used to make him clear Vara, when his own passion for her had failed to do so?

He stood at the west windows of the

club, looking across wide reaches of golf course and hilly uplands. The full tide was seeping up through the long-armed inlets of the bay. Mist rose hesitantly from the low land, as if it were some delicate, sentient being striving to keep its trailing garments from the beseeching fingers of the tide. Lights showed faintly from Outre Mer, where Cherry Sloane held her house party. It stood along the east shore, built like a Norman country house, one-storied, about a quadrangle, squat towers at each corner, with pigeons and doves clustered thickly about. The crows rose from the fringe of woods behind it, in questing, guerrilla lines, scouting back and forth in the twilight. The four lights in the towers drew and held Seton's attention against his will. They seemed to beckon to him in the afterglow.

He heard his name paged and hurried to answer the call, thinking it might be from Vara. Instead, there came back to him Cheridah Sloane's voice, eager, musical, with a little throaty break in it like a boy's contralto.

"Hello there, Bobbie. Just heard how near by you are. I want you to come over to-night, will you? Please, Bob, I've got some awfully comical people here."

Seton heard and smiled to himself, visualizing quickly her motive in asking him. She was getting rather bored. The nearest vent for a thrill of excitement was the bringing together unexpectedly the two chief male actors in the Jern drama.

"You mean Saranov?" he asked lazily. "I've met him, Cherry. He doesn't exactly appeal to my sense of humor."

"Coward!" She said it softly, tantalizingly. "I've always thought you were afraid of him, Bob. Otherwise, you might have— Anyway, come to-night, will you? He knows you are here at Keddesley. You should have

seen his magnificent manner when he said to me he had forgotten what you looked like. Just a bit of a grand slam, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"I think I may be able to jar his memory. You're a mischief-making, intriguing feline, utterly untrustworthy and most provocative, Cherry. But I'll be there presently."

Her laugh caught him as he hung up the receiver. Cherry herself leaned back contentedly in her chair, her eyes high lighted with excitement. She would not tell Saranov that Seton was coming. It would be a delicate bit of diplomacy, handling the situation when the two men faced each other. Whatever the outcome might be, she felt no responsibility. If Seton could be unnerved or embarrassed by the stronger Saranov, she would be repaid. Almost, as she sat there, she wished that Vara might be made aware of the encounter. She moved her hand toward the telephone, half raising the Pompadour doll with its festooned, silken skirts, when she felt the observance of some one near. Nadenko bowed slightly from the arched doorway, his gaze serene and inscrutable.

"Pardon, madame. Prince Saranov informed me you desire the studio to-night for amusement. A little exhibition performance, perhaps, with the foils?"

"Very late, after the others have gone. We will only have the house guests. Try to have it exciting, will you, Nadenko?"

She turned her head sideways to look at him, her chin on her palm, her eyes guarded.

"Yes, madame."

"Are you a better fencer than the prince?" She got back the import of the Russian's close-lipped-smile. "I imagined so. I feel safer, you know, when there is one about who is a master, some one in control."

"I understand perfectly, madame."

Alone, she stood at the window a few moments, her thoughts reaching to the woman at Broadmoor. To trouble and hurt her through the humiliation of Seton at the hands of Saranov, that would be partial payment for what she herself had gone through after the hour with Seton months before. They had all been out on a wild party at a roadside inn twenty miles out on the shore. She had insisted on driving back herself, leaving the chauffeur, and taking Seton along for company in the low, underslung roadster. There had been an imminent smash-up, a skid around a dangerous curve, and his arms close about her as she shrieked. Later, when they reached her home, she had felt the reaction from drinking and had made a fool of herself. She could feel now the tight, cool grip of Seton's hands on her wrists, hear his voice.

"There is just one woman in the world whom I love. I'm sorry, Cherry. You don't mean this. You're just a little fool."

During the evening, Seton again tried to call Vara, and failed. Arguing with Kasha brought merely the bland reiteration, "Madame cannot be disturbed. She regret." Finally he sent a note to Broadmoor, before leaving for Cherry's.

I am going to see him to-night, and try to arrange a compromise. If I fail, I shall follow you wherever you go, while life lasts.

He reached Outre Mer around nine. Cherry had maneuvered his meeting with Saranov by keeping the latter close to her. When the prince recognized the late guest his whole frame seemed to tighten into rigidity, his eyes widening, one eyebrow upraised.

"Looked exactly like a German police dog, didn't he?" Cherry said happily, when he left her with Seton. "You were very well-behaved, Bobbie, very."

Waiting an opportunity of seeing the prince alone, Seton was pliable to her

whim during the evening. It was the usual round, he thought, Cherry's idea of a pleasant evening: plenty to drink, dancing in a dimly lighted room, a few quiet games in lighted corners, and then, more to drink. When the last car had left around twelve she led the way to the new studio at the top of the house. It was to be a surprise, she told Seton, clinging to his arm on the way up the circular staircase, a new thrill. He hardly heard her. Saranov had deliberately avoided every attempt he had made to speak with him alone, had ignored him pointedly. The element of the sensational had been lacking so far in their encounter. He thought, a bit cynically, that Cherry and her guests were disappointed in them both.

At the last landing the roof rose in high, peaked gables. A door was opened, and Seton stared as he entered what appeared to be an exact replica of Nadenko's old fencing studio at Jorn. The painted skylight, with its distorted, decadent figures grinning down upon the assembly, the roughly plastered walls, tinted in pale, Dutch pink, the great piles of velvet cushions against the side walls, and Nadenko himself, tall, thin, distinctive, receiving them. With puzzled, drawn brows, he wondered what Cherry's game was to warrant the costly setting, just what reaction she banked on.

Nestled down on a pile of cushions, she was ignoring him now, flirting daintily with Saranov. There were five or six others, house guests, people he knew well, all more or less feeling the effects of Cherry's hospitality. Watching them, as he leaned with folded arms against the wall, he traced a likeness in the varying expressions on their faces to the skylight figures. *Le roi s'amuse*. At all hazards, they must be fed in their craving for the next best thing, the keying of life's strings a bit tighter, nearer the snapping point, to see how near they could come to it.

Nadenko had not changed a particle. The same remote personality, silent, indifferent. Only in his eyes Seton thought he detected a somber shadow, memory perhaps of the white-faced young queen and the scenes he had moved through in just such a setting.

"You fence, I know you do, Bobbie," Cherry said presently, singling him out with her imperative, childish voice. "Don't be afraid of Nadenko. He's been teaching all of us. I am getting so supple and dangerous I don't know myself. I wish you were dressed like *Beaucaire*—nice, black-satin breeches, ruffled shirt. Wouldn't he make an adorable *Beaucaire*? Somebody press that button. It's midnight, isn't it? Carnival hour. We'll drink nothing but champagne now. Igor, perform for me marvelous maneuvers. I demand a thrill."

"Madame, you shall be obeyed." Saranov bowed to her gravely, stepped behind the tall, black screen to remove coat and waistcoat. Nadenko was selecting the prince's favorite foil from the rack, when Cherry again urged Seton to enter into the game. He smiled down at her indulgently.

"You know I haven't touched a foil in years. You only want to show me up, Cherry."

"You studied in Spain, I know you did, with Cazanue Seballo."

Nadenko favored him with a measuring glance.

"What length does monsieur prefer?"

Saranov had stepped from behind the screen, a taut, waiting figure, smoking leisurely, the picture of controlled nerves.

"To one who has perfected the retreat there should be no apprehension," he remarked quietly.

The silence in the room was startling. Seton felt himself the center of the focused gaze, not only of the living ones in the room, but, at that instant of extreme tension, even the figures on

the skylight grinned back at him challengingly. He returned the Russian's level stare.

"It would be a pleasure to engage you, Saranov, if you care to take on an amateur."

Cherry leaned forward eagerly, shaking back her heavy, bobbed hair, her lips curving back dryly in a forced smile. Once she glanced quickly at Nadenko leaning against the wall, but gained no mental sustenance from that quarter.

The others, too, had caught the contagion of menace in the air of the overlighted, fantastic room. In utter silence the two faced each other, when Seton was ready. Then there was only the sound of their heels tapping on the bare floor, the slight click of steel against steel, as their foils locked and pressed for advantage.

Seton's brain had cleared the moment he faced the prince. He found himself meeting Igor's attacks without much effort, parrying with the old tricks Seballo had made his own. Thinking not of the game, but of the hellish picture Saranov made behind his wire mask, his teeth exposed in a forced grin, his eyes showing the whites about the dark irises, the heavy lines of his cheeks settling deeply, the veins rising in em-purpled furrows at temple and neck. Like a Chinese mask of hate, Seton thought, and suddenly found himself touched on the flank. Like lightning, Saranov had feinted on a half-circle parade, disengaged his point, and thrust deeply.

"You'd be a perfectly good dead boy this minute," called Cherry half hysterically, "if that had been the real article."

Saranov smiled slowly across at his opponent.

"If it had been the real article, Mr. Seton would never have tried his luck. He knows when to play safe, no?"

"I will fight you now with the others,

if you like." Seton smiled back at him coolly, his head slightly upraised, his face white with suppressed anger. "I may be slightly out of practice, but I should be very glad to try it."

As Nadenko selected the slender, highly polished rapiers from the rack, there seemed to settle over the forced brilliancy of the varicolored room a strange stillness. Even on the blurred consciousness of those present, the meaning of this fresh encounter forced itself. Cherry rose to her feet, entangling herself in the spangled fish tails of her bizarre, costly gown.

"It's enough!" she protested. "I don't want you to fight that way. Bobbie, sit down, and stop looking wild. Igor, you'll bite that mask, if you don't look out. It's ridiculous! Let's all go downstairs and dance."

Saranov removed the mask and breast pad, flinging them behind him, after Seton's example. Neither answered her. Nadenko moved silently between her and the two opposing figures. Like a personification of some relentless, pagan god of fury, he stood eying the two as they poised for combat. With every removal of pretense, there was deadly hate and intent in Saranov's face. The American was tense, but quiet. He chose the attack this time, pressing every advantage, taking his time, parrying the prince's lunges with wrists of steel. The room seemed chokingly hot, the lights unbearably brilliant, the time between retreats stretched out until Cherry found herself sobering, getting the meaning of the scene before her as she stood wavering by the door, her teeth pressed into clenched knuckles to keep from screaming.

"Stop them!" she called out. "Why doesn't somebody stop them? Nadenko!"

But Nadenko had crouched now, heels together, knees wide apart, staring with sharp, unblinking eyes at Seton. He was gaining. Saranov

fought with deep, indrawn, audible breaths, half stumbled once in retreat, regained position and thrust savagely at the other's exposed left side. The smile deepened on Seton's face. His frame seemed to become taller, his shirt showed a slender, widening stain of crimson under the shoulder blade. Before Nadenko could reach him he had poised a second, meeting the attack of the prince with one swift thrust, unerring and deadly. Saranov crumpled to the floor as Cherry fled down the circular staircase, sobbing cries for help, followed by the women guests.

Seton watched the fencing master as he knelt by the prince, tearing open his shirt, listening for the silenced heart-beat.

"The game is yours, monsieur. He is dead."

Through a conspiracy of silence, the news of Prince Saranov's sudden death by an accident, while fencing, reached the world beyond Keddesley Hills without scandal. Cherry Sloane closed her house and left hurriedly for Europe. On the same boat went Nadenko, personally conducting the body of his dead master back to its proper resting place in the old royal tombs below Jörn, where Dagmar lay beside Paul.

"I wish you'd stay longer," Elsie Morgan said anxiously, pausing a moment on the threshold of Seton's room. "There's no earthly reason, Vara, why you can't be married right here, and stay as long as you like. Bob's wound will be healed by Thanksgiving. He should not travel so soon."

"Thanks, dear." Vara, in her white nurse's garb, bent over the bed by the window as she adjusted the shade to shield the sleeper. "As soon as he can travel we are going away, somewhere on earth where there are no footprints, nothing to remember."

"I don't blame you one bit." Elsie hesitated, found herself with the senti-

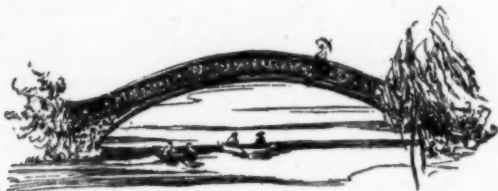
mental lump in her throat that rose every time she contemplated her guests, and left them together.

Standing above Seton, Vara's face softened into a yearning tenderness. So many days to make up for, so many ways of recompense to him! Her hands fluttered above his face, the coverlet,

making everything easy for him, longing to lift him in her arms in a close, fast embrace, as she would have held a beloved child.

"Vara?" He moved restlessly. "Are you there?"

"Always!" She knelt beside him, whispering it. "Always, my very dear."



VALENTINES ARE MEMORIES

JUST a little attic room where things are laid away,
Useless, faded, broken things that speak of yesterday;
Baby frocks that are outgrown, and books that go unread,
Tokens of forgotten folk, and voices from the dead.

Little dreams—they hide away in that small attic place,
Furtively as tiny ghosts that dare not show a face;
Silently and secretly they linger close to me,
When I touch a lacquered box that opens with a key.

Ah, the key is never turned, the lock is red with rust,
Half the contents of the box have doubtless turned to dust;
Just a letter—done in verse—a crumpled rose or two,
Just the buckle that I wore upon my satin shoe.

Just a flimsy bit of lace, a program and a fan,
Funny little tinsel things, just woman things—a man
Would most likely glance at them, and smile and turn away—
Useless, faded, broken things that speak of yesterday!

Valentines? Why, valentines are more than ribbon bows,
More than gilded paper hearts, bedecked with wreath and rose,
More than Youth's triumphant song, and more than
springtime tears—
Valentines are memories that reach across the years!

Silently and secretly the dreams creep close to me,
When I touch a lacquered box that opens with a key;
Secretly and silently they watch me turn away,
From the little broken things that speak of yesterday!

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.



The Man Hunt

By May Edginton

Author of "The Price of Wings,"
"The Way the Wind Blows," etc.

WHAT HAPPENED IN PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Fay Brunie, struggling to support herself and a small orphan nephew, who is very ill, on her meager salary as a stenographer, fights desperately against the advances of Charles Fairway, wealthy and influential. But when the doctor, whom Fairway has sent to see Dick, says that the boy must go to a sanatorium for immediate treatment, Fay, realizing her inability to meet these demands on her slender purse, reluctantly consents to marry Fairway, though she fears and hates him. After the marriage ceremony the girl comes back to the shabby house she has called home to see Dick, before departing with Fairway on his yacht for a prolonged honeymoon. She finds that she has made a useless sacrifice—Dick is dead. In her utter despair, she runs away from her husband. The next day she obtains a position as mannequin in the smart shop of Basil, London's famous man dressmaker. Several days later Basil, pleased with the new mannequin, takes her to dinner and the theater, and Fay, lovely in a costume of silver tissue which he has permitted her to borrow from the shop, attracts the attention of diners and theatergoers. But at the theater, to her dismay, she discovers Fairway watching her from an upper box. Basil, who knows Fairway and is anxious to have his good will, insists upon Fay's accompanying him to Fairway's box. Fay, realizing that her position depends upon it, reluctantly goes with him. Basil leaves them together after a few moments and Fairway first pleads with the girl to return to him, and then threatens to force her to do so. But though Fay is conscious of her own helplessness, she refuses. The next morning Fairway comes to Basil's shop and Fay, terrified, fails miserably when she is called upon to show him some gowns. Basil, little suspecting the cause of her nervousness, is enraged at her failure and tells her she will have to leave the shop that evening. Immediately after the talk with Basil the Duchess of Braintree comes into the salon, accompanied by John Barry who, Fay has learned, is one of the directors of the Barry-Lyndon Film Company. During the lunch hour, when Fay is in the shop alone, she selects a sumptuous costume, dresses quickly, and, followed by the page, leaves the shop.

CHAPTER VI.

FAY swaggered into the office of the film company, her fur wrap clutched about her in the approved manner.

"I want to see Mr. Barry."

"Have you an appointment, madam?" asked the clerk who received her. But he looked respectfully at the unmistakable sumptuousness of her clothes.

"No," she said haughtily.

"Then you cannot see him, madam."

"Go and see, if you please."

The clerk was impressed.

"What name, madam?"

"Miss Fay Brunie." The clerk went toward an inner door and she followed silently on his heels. Not until he had

opened the door did he realize the tactics.

"Please, madam!" he cried. But beyond him she saw two men lounging by a fire, and at the sound of her clear voice they looked up and saw her.

"Mr. Barry?" said she, looking beyond the clerk straight into Barry's eyes.

"The lady, sir——" began the clerk.

Barry came forward.

"Madam——"

"The lady's name's Miss Fay Brunie, sir," said the clerk, "and she——"

"I wanted to see you and Mr. Lyndon within the next ten minutes," said the girl with a clear audaciousness, and she stepped past the clerk into the room.

Her cheeks were faintly flushed, and her eyes were lamps.

"She's rushed us, John," said a fat voice behind the smiling young man, and she looked past him at Drake Lyndon.

"It's all right," said John Barry, and the perturbed clerk withdrew.

When he had closed the door Lyndon spoke.

"Miss—Fay Brunie, what can we do for you?"

"I want a big part in your next production," she replied audaciously.

They both laughed.

"Well!" said Lyndon.

"Have you done any film work?" Barry asked.

"No," she replied, "but—may I sit down?" Her knees were trembling beneath her. Barry proffered a chair at once. When she sat down a weakness and a faintness attacked her, against which she braced herself.

"I've just *got* to have it!" said she.

"Why?" Lyndon demanded, with the indulgent amusement of a man for a pretty and whimsical woman.

"A bet," she replied, the words coming to her glibly.

The two men smiled again. "Tell us about it," they said.

Daringly she went on:

"I've got a bet that I'll walk into the Lyndon-Barry office, see the directors within five minutes of asking for them, get a star part, and a contract. And I want to win that bet."

"Why?" Lyndon demanded again.

She looked at him gayly and confidently.

"Because I always get what I want."

"But that's bad for you," he replied, in his fat voice.

"I don't think so," Barry said, smiling.

She hugged her furs closer around her, cuddling her hands in their softness. They gave her a wonderful feeling of power and confidence.

"Please try me," she urged vivaciously.

"We'll see," said Lyndon, studying her attentively.

"I've got a film face," she urged.

"Who told you so?" asked Lyndon.

"All my friends tell me so!"

"Oh, amateur friends!" said Lyndon scornfully.

"And you're looking for a new girl," she added, ignoring his scorn of amateurs.

"Who told you that?" queried the bland Lyndon.

She remembered stray gleanings of information.

"Why, I saw it in the Sunday papers."

Lyndon laughed very pleasantly.

"My dear young lady, do you think you'd stand the racket?"

"I'd adore the racket."

"Uh," said Lyndon, "for a week. Then your dances and your bridge and your week-end parties would get in your way. You wouldn't *work*. I know you society girls!"

"You don't know me," she pouted.

"True," agreed Lyndon. She looked at him under her heavy lashes and she saw in his eyes something that clutched at her heart: a keen surprise, appreciation, speculation. The blood began to sing in her head. "It isn't possible that I'm to pull it off?" The question ran through her brain. Then she saw Lyndon glance at Barry.

John Barry was looking at her.

"No experience," he said, half to himself, "none at all. But—"

"One moment, John," said Lyndon.

"Miss Brunie," he went on, getting up and walking about, "you're a wonderful type. Allow me to say so. Mr. Barry and I both think—" He interrogated John Barry with a look.

Barry nodded.

"Barry and I both think you're a—most unusual type. I may say I do not often make a mistake. The true film

face is full of expression, mobile, distinct—you have it. I agree with those friends of yours. I am accustomed to pass judgment in five minutes. They say I can judge quicker than any producer in London, and when I saw you come in—I do not mind owing to you that I thought—and Mr. Barry thought 'There's our girl.' But here's the hitch," Lyndon continued. "I've employed some of you society girls. I know you. If you were a poor girl, I'd give you a nice little contract—not very much at first, of course. Will you work—say—for a year without stopping?"

"Yes, I'll work for a year without stopping."

Lyndon looked at Barry, and the younger man nodded again.

During the ensuing silence, while the fat Lyndon balanced himself up and down on his toes and heels, a trick of his, and Barry gazed at her with the eager and unqualified admiration of the young man for a beautiful girl, she held herself to her chair by sheer exercise of will. She knew now, as she sat there in her borrowed clothes, playing her bluff, casting her last sou down upon the gaming table of life, that it was all or nothing. Yet, with a faint smile on her lips, eyes shining and burning, she sat there placidly. At last Lyndon began to speak slowly and impressively.

"You appear to be a very remarkable young lady, Miss Brunie. If you will give us your word—above your contract, for you society girls laugh at contracts—that you will work honestly and hard, I think, and Mr. Barry thinks, that you may do well. We could certainly, on the strength of your most charming appearance and on the strength of the judgment which I have formed, offer you a part——"

She leaned slightly forward.

"A star part?"

"We are going to do 'Rockbottom,' adapted from the famous novel of that name," said Lyndon, gazing at her in-

scrutably, "and we haven't cast the part of *Marya*. Whether you——"

"I could play that."

"How do you know you could?" demanded Lyndon.

"I would play it."

"That," said Lyndon in a soft voice, after a significant pause, "is my opinion, too."

"You'll give it to me?"

"You're anxious to play that part?"

"I am! Let me play *Marya*," she begged.

"We shall work you hard," said Lyndon, "but we shall reward you by a big boom."

"And a big salary?" she asked impertinently.

"Oh come!" he remonstrated. "Why do you want a big salary? Why should we give it to you?"

"Business. And my bet."

"Your bet includes—— We'll give you five or six pounds a week. Say six."

She began acting in earnest.

"Oh, oh, oh! That's no good at all. I've bet I'll walk out of here with my contract and the first week's salary in advance in my pocket."

"And what, if one may ask, is the first week's salary?"

She gazed at him with smiling audacity.

"It is twenty pounds."

"No!" said Lyndon decisively. But he looked at her quickly from the corner of his eye. She got up from her chair, swathed the wrap of supple fur about her, held out a small hand in white kid.

"Good-by."

"What's your hurry, Miss Brunie?" Lyndon remonstrated, with a bland raising of the eyebrows.

"My bet. I'm going to win it before two o'clock. That's the point. You're no good to me. I've got to find some one else, and I've precious little time to do it in."

"To whom are you going?" asked Barry suddenly, in a businesslike tone.

"To the Pomegranite Film, Limited."

"Look here, Lyndon——" Barry began.

"You're a greedy young lady," said Lyndon, addressing her with an ag-grieved air.

"I'm not!" she contradicted petu-lantly. "What's twenty pounds? It wouldn't buy me a frock."

She pulled the furs closer about her and walked disdainfully toward the door.

"Oh, don't be in such a hurry," Lyn-don called after her.

"I tell you, Mr. Lyndon, by two o'clock——"

"But you've won your bet, my dear girl," he complained.

"Spare us another moment, Miss Brunie," said John Barry, his hand on the back of the chair she had just left.

She returned to it, all spoiled-darling smiles and dimples.

"But how you *do* argue!" said she.

Lyndon struck a bell. His secretary came in.

"Usual contract," said Lyndon. "Amount—twenty. Six weeks."

Fay forced herself to maintain her attitude of indifference.

"You'll love the work," Barry assured her.

And then the secretary came in again.

"You'll want to read this, Miss Brunie," said Lyndon, handing her the contract. She held it before her eyes, but they were misty. After a lapse of time she handed it back. "It's all right?" he queried.

"All right," she replied.

"I never take long over these things," said Lyndon, signing rapidly. "Here, John." Barry signed. The secretary witnessed the signatures. Fay's turn came. Steadying her deadly cold hand, she scrawled quiveringly: "Fay Brunie."

"Mr. Lyndon," whispered the secre-

tary, "you've a luncheon engagement at——"

Lyndon sprang up.

"Good morning, Miss Brunie. We'll see you at nine to-morrow at the studio. At nine, *prompt*, please. John, you'll finish this?" He hurried out.

Fay's hand lay lax on the table; the pen dropped from it. She felt her nerves relaxing; her muscles sagged. Immediately she clutched at the contract. The room swam around her and receded. She heard Barry's voice from a great dis-tance asking quickly and quietly:

"What is it?"

She opened her eyes widely at him, but saw him only through a mist.

"Faint," she murmured. In a space of time which she could not gauge his arm was behind her shoulder and he held a glass of red wine to her lips.

She drank.

"Close your eyes a moment," he said.

She closed them, her head against his arm. He held the glass, and again she drank. Opening her eyes, as the life came back to her heart, she saw him surveying her with an acute, wide-open look.

She sat erect, laughing.

"What a fool I am!"

"What have you been doing with yourself?" he asked sympathetically.

"Late nights, I suppose; dancing too much," she sighed.

"You should take a fresh-air week-end."

"I know it."

"Really better now?"

"Really better." Her hand lay firmly on the contract. "If you'll just give me that check to wave, I'll go."

"Having won a knock-out."

She laughed prettily.

He drew out a check book from a pocket of his coat. With an acute sense of irony, of mirth, she watched him write the check.

"Twenty pounds."

"Wanted on the telephone, sir," said the secretary, peeping in.

"Excuse me, please," said Barry. "This telephone's out of order. I'll be back in five minutes." He disappeared into the outer office, and Fay was alone.

She gazed around her. On an oak chest against the wall things were arranged as on a sideboard: glasses, decanters, a silver biscuit box. She crossed over to it, opened the lid of the box, and began to eat avidly. That morning she had breakfasted on a cup of tea.

Perching on the chest, she sat there eating stealthily and quickly. The box was full. In a moment hunger hypnotized her and she ate ravenously. For a long time she had been half hungry; for the past week, save for the Savoy dinner, painfully hungry. In two minutes she had dipped in for her sixth biscuit. Suddenly, instinctively, she sensed the trapper, and glanced over her shoulder. John Barry was standing in the doorway, looking at her.

CHAPTER VII.

Fay did not speak, and Barry, too, was silent. But after the blank moment of revelation the girl got up and walked slowly back to the table, her eyes on him all the time. On the table lay her empty hand bag, the contract, and the check. She dropped her hand upon the contract.

He watched her, learning by every hunted movement what was in her mind. Her hand crumpled up the contract and closed around it.

"You can't take this back!" she said defiantly.

"No," he replied.

Not taking her eyes from him, she felt for the check, picked it up, and put it into the hand bag.

He drew a long breath, and then, suddenly, he went up to her, put his hands on her shoulders, and held her before him.

"You are hungry?"

"What is that to you?" she replied guardedly.

The young man met the look in her eyes without flinching.

"You'd better have lunch," he said.

"Yes, I have twenty pounds," she answered, cuddling her hands round the hand bag.

"I meant——"

"Not with you—thank you."

"Let me cash the check here," he suggested, after a pause. "No trouble. Let me——"

"If you will, please."

He counted out the notes, then took back the check, and tore it across, without a word.

"You can't go back on your contract," she said again.

"I—we—do not want to. Don't! I can't bear to see a girl smile like that."

"I'm sorry. It was involuntary. I don't wish to annoy you. I wish, of course, to please you."

For the first time he flushed and winced.

"I wish you'd tell me——" he began humbly.

"No, no!"

"As you like. Only, why did you bluff us?"

"To get myself a living such as I've never had—something above bare starvation."

"But the society game?"

"Would either you or Lyndon have given me a contract at twenty pounds a week if you'd known how desperately I needed it?"

He opened his mouth for impetuous reply, then closed it again.

She went on:

"If you'd known I was hungry?"

The young man kept his troubled stare on her.

"If you'd known I'd had no breakfast, would you have given me all this for lunch?" Again she cuddled the bag.

"We——" he began.

"You'd have got me at a low price

because you'd have known you could get me."

He thought this over.

"Three or four pounds a week at the outside," she said.

"Perhaps five or six."

She smiled.

"You'd have paid me three or four pounds."

"Business——"

"I'm not complaining," she interrupted him. "Business is business. Business is bluff and I had a better bluff than you had. That's all."

"Everything you say is right," he agreed. "I see it."

"And everything you say is right. I see that."

"Forgive two blundering business men, Miss Brunie," he pleaded humbly.

She put out a slim hand and he caught it with a warm, friendly pressure.

"Promise me something then, Mr. Barry."

"I'll promise you anything in the world that I can perform."

"Don't tell Mr. Lyndon."

"Why?" he asked protestingly.

"This is between you and me," she said. "You found out by accident. I would never have let you know, either."

"I wonder," he said, "if I should not have known anyway?"

She looked down and murmured.

"You have not promised."

"Of course, I promise. Your secret is your own, you brave girl."

"Then I'll go away happy."

"One moment." His face flushed boyishly. "I wish you—before you go, won't you"—he kept stammering over it—"I want to prescribe another glass of wine."

She remained unembarrassed while he floundered distractedly.

"No," she refused him. "No, thank you, I'm going to lunch immediately. I'm going to have soup, filet of sole, lamb cutlets, *pêche Melba*. And I'm going to drink champagne."

She did not know how her tongue lingered over the names of dishes, like a person who has long dreamed of food beyond price. It cut Barry to the soul.

Just then the secretary opened the door and, with a perturbed frown, said:

"Mr. Barry?"

"I tell you, Mr. Barry will see me!" a voice behind him cried sharply. "A lady with him? I know that. There's some one with me who wants to see that lady. Stand away, you damned fool!" And then Basil stood in the doorway with the secretary, and the stolid face of a police constable rose behind his shoulder.

Fay caught her breath; turned white.

John Barry remained very quiet, but his look brought Basil to a halt. The police officer, with a glance around the room, awaited events.

"All right, Mortimer," Barry said to the agitated secretary.

A moment later the door closed upon him, and Fay Brunie stood up to face her accuser.

After the briefest of pauses John Barry stepped to her side.

"You don't need to worry," he told her, in a low voice, restraining a flood of eloquence from Basil, with a keen glance. "I'm here to see this through."

"You don't know——" she murmured.

"No, you don't know, Mr. Barry," Basil broke out. "You don't know what kind of a girl you've got there. Officer!" He stopped at Barry's look. Then the young man spoke.

"Officer," he said easily, "wait in the office, if you'll be so good."

"Stay here!" said Basil. "This is a plant. She'll get out by another door."

"Sir," said the policeman, having made his summary of the room, "there is no other door."

"Wait outside, please," Barry repeated firmly.

The man withdrew respectfully.

"Certainly, Mr. Barry," he ac-

quiesced. Free from the humiliation of his presence, the girl drew a big sigh.

"Now, then," said Barry.

Basil's full lips were drawn into a long line across his face.

"She walked out of my place this morning in these clothes which belong to me. Every stitch is stolen."

"I took a chance to get a job," she said steadily. "I should have brought the clothes back whether I got it or not."

"You liar!"

"I'm not——"

"You thief!"

"If you address Miss Brunie in those terms again, I'll throw you out," said John Barry.

"But I'm right!" Basil yelled at him.

"If the lady were not here," said Barry, "I'd tell you what you are."

"Oh," said the dressmaker, "don't mind her!"

"Shut up!" said Barry inelegantly.

Basil sputtered, then spoke with a kind of hissing restraint, which was all the tribute he could bring himself to pay even to John Barry, one of the most eligible young men in society.

"I want my clothes. How dare she take them? My clothes. I'll prosecute her! The constable's here to take her."

Barry pressed a bell.

"Mortimer," he said languidly to the interested secretary, "give the officer my compliments and tell him to go."

"That's my affair!" snapped Basil, wheeling upon the secretary.

"Tell him yourself, then," said Barry, waiting.

"I won't, Mr. Barry!"

"Mortimer!"

The secretary endeavored to leave the room, but was impeded by Basil.

"Throw him off, Mortimer," said Barry, with a rich and healthy young man's invulnerability to legal and physical consequences.

"You dare!" cried Basil.

Barry strode across, hauled him

roughly away and the secretary departed.

"Now, the story," Barry demanded, when they were again alone.

The grim note in the young man's voice somehow silenced Basil. He pulled himself together to think. He looked at the girl's white face, flecked with red on either cheek bone.

"I've given that girl every chance; done everything for her," he protested, with a sulkily vehemence. "This—is how she rewards me. They're all hussies."

Barry stood over him, intent on inquisition.

"How much did you pay her?"

"I took her without a premium," said Basil evasively, "without training."

"What did you pay her?"

"The mere money value of what I was prepared to teach her can't easily be estimated."

"How much did he pay you, Miss Brunie?"

"Thirty shillings," she sighed, almost inaudibly.

"You cad!" said Barry, addressing Basil.

"Come," said Basil, "I don't like your tone. I've the key to this situation, anyway." He recovered some of his swagger at the remembrance. Then, again aware of Barry's measuring eye, he changed his tactics.

"What do you propose?" he inquired, taking out the inevitable, golden-silk handkerchief and caressing his lips delicately.

"I'll tell you when you have satisfied my curiosity. Why did Miss Brunie come here this morning? Had she left you?"

"No!" cried Basil. "She was not to leave till to-night. She was thieving my time as well as my clothes."

"Enough of that," said Barry. "When did you give her notice to go?"

"This morning," replied Basil un- easily.

"A day's notice, then?"

"She was doing the first week on trial."

The young man suddenly brushed his hand wildly backward over his reddish hair.

"If I hear any more of this, I won't be responsible for my actions," he choked. "Now, you listen to me."

"With pleasure," said Basil, sitting down and throwing one knee over the other. "With the greatest of pleasure, if you have anything practical to say."

Barry leaned back against the table, folding his arms across his broad chest.

"What I have to say is practical," he assured the other man. "It runs like this: You see before you Fay Brunie, a beautiful girl whom you'll beg to dress in six months' time—a girl the Lyndon-Barry Company is going to star. We believe in her. Bring this case into court, if you like. She's got the whole Lyndon-Barry firm behind her for bail and a romantic story about you and your damned shop that'll make cinema goers' hair curl. We don't mind the story. We like it. We're all out for free advertising. And it will do her good. As for the clothes she's doing you the honor to wear—what are they worth?"

"A thousand pounds with the furs," replied Basil, hesitantly, staring from the one to the other.

"Will you take a check for them now? Or shall she return the clothes as she intended, having walked in here, the choicest mannequin we've ever seen, and shown us what your moldy shop could do?"

"Putting it like that——" began Basil.

"That is how I put it."

"Putting it like that," Basil repeated, "of course modifies the view I was obliged to take of the case. She went out without leave, and my page, a smart boy, followed to see where she went; and I followed also, very naturally. My course of action has been a perfectly

legitimate one. Still, putting it as you have, the case is a good deal altered. If Miss Brunie cares to retain the clothes—if they please her—— What's her salary, if I may ask?"

"Twenty pounds a week," the girl replied.

"Retain the clothes without the furs," continued the dressmaker. "I have nothing to say against it. The dress, hat, and accessories are worth, let us say, to be easy, a hundred pounds. You will own that my attitude was very natural, Mr. Barry, and perfectly legitimate."

"Get out, Basil," said Barry impatiently. "You make me tired!"

The dressmaker got up hurriedly.

"You will own——"

"We have owned to our intentions, and that is all."

The dressmaker moved toward the girl. The expression of his olive face was a blend of surprise, congratulation, and aggrievement.

"My dear Miss Brunie," he said, "you've behaved very foolishly. A little confidence placed in me——"

She opened her eyes at him widely.

Basil looked around for his hat, found and stroked it.

"There has been a misunderstanding all around," said he. "For my part, I wish to congratulate Miss Brunie. I wish her every success."

"Good-by," nodded Barry.

"Good-by," said Basil. "Good-by, Miss Brunie. No one could be more delighted than myself at this happy climax to a most painful episode. I have an engagement and must be going. Good-by."

A moment later Barry and Fay found themselves alone. The girl looked at him for an instant without expression and then, to his consternation, he saw her face quiver and change. Tears filled her eyes. She dropped into a chair near the table, covered her face with her hands, and wept.

He sat sideways on the table and leaned over her, patting her shoulder. Having the true male idea of what constitutes a woman's comforter, he wanted to take her in his arms and kiss her tears dry.

"What do you think of me now?" she wept.

"I think your the bravest girl I've ever met, the very bravest!" he whispered over and over.

She began to laugh brokenly and to dry her tears. From the recesses of the vanity bag from Basil's she drew various little fitments: a tortoise-shell powder box filled with powder, a gold-framed mirror just big enough for a fairy. She dabbed with meticulous, feminine care at her eyelids while Barry withdrew to the hearth, leaned his elbow upon the mantelpiece, and watched her.

"I must repair the damages!" she cried, on a half laugh. "I can't go crying to a festive lunch and a half holiday."

"You must be tired," he said softly.

"I feel I've had enough of emotions for one morning. But I'm not merely tired now, I'm deliciously tired, happily tired. Like a man feels after a hard-won match at lacrosse, or polo, I should think."

"I'd like to prescribe for you."

"You shan't. I'm going to prescribe just what I like for myself to-day. I've never had twenty pounds before. Can you realize that?"

"It's hard to," he replied, smiling at her.

She drew the powder puff firmly along the lines of cheek and chin. He followed the line, thinking the contour of her face delightful. Then she tucked the things away in the vanity bag and arose.

"Still wanting to lunch alone?" he asked gently.

"Yes, yes!"

"Then, good morning."

"Good morning." He walked to the door with her and in a moment she was gone.

In the outer office Barry spoke to Mortimer.

"Mortimer, that was Fairway—Mr. Charles Fairway, who called me on the phone a while ago, when I was talking to Miss Brunie. I didn't get his message exactly, but think he suggested a meeting, or something of the sort. You'd better mention it to Mr. Lyndon when he comes in."

"Mr. Charles Fairway? Very good, sir," said the secretary, jotting down the name.

Barry picked up his hat and coat and went out in a dream.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fay began a new life the next day. In one of the best-fitted studios in the country she underwent the ordeal of her first rehearsal for the screen. But the ordeal was pleasurable. Lyndon, full of amazing inspiration and vitality, produced; his company was composed mainly of young, fresh, and spirited people, imbued with the same tireless energy; and the new *Marya* found herself carried along on a running stream of enthusiasm. She worked faithfully and intelligently, and when she went to remove the ghastly make-up at the end of a strenuous day, Lyndon said:

"You've done well, child, well. Continue so, and you'll do."

At noon Lyndon had been surprised by the arrival of John Barry. The studio was just out of town, on a famous heath, and the young man had motored out in time to share the company's picnic lunch. Barry came straight over to Lyndon, and sat down beside him.

"How's the new girl shaping up?" he asked casually.

"Well!" answered Lyndon. "Have you ever known me to make a mistake in casting a woman's part?"

"No, but she was untried," exclaimed John.

"That doesn't matter," replied Lyndon. "They all have to begin."

During the short, gray afternoon the young man sat clasping his knee, smoking cigarette after cigarette, while the company monotonously rehearsed one short scene over and over. But when work ended and the bustle of departure began he revealed his purpose, and Lyndon smiled.

"I've got my car here, Miss Brunie," said the young man. "You'll allow me to drive you to the city, won't you?"

"I should, Miss Brunie," said Lyndon, examining the ash on his fat cigar. "It will be nicer than the train or a bus top or what not. She's been a good girl, John, she's done extremely well." Waved away humorously by Lyndon, Fay found herself walking beside Barry.

The young man, quietly elated, gave her a quick, congratulatory glance.

"Tired?"

"Tired? No. So full of life I could push the car up to town like a perambulator."

"Well, you're not going to try," he laughed, "I can tell you that. What about the half holiday yesterday?"

"Gorgeous!"

"What did you do?"

"I lunched."

"How many times?"

"Once, and well. Then I went home."

"Where's that, if I may ask?"

She told him.

"But now," she said, "I shall have a tiny flat, a flat all my own. Yes, after lunch I just went home, up to my room, and lighted the gas fire."

"Highly significant, to be sure, but—"

"I burned the gas all the rest of the day and all night. Yesterday afternoon I just sat by the fire and dreamed."

"I can understand that," he said slowly.

They were outside now and had

reached the car, with its shining brass fittings. Fay saw that there was no chauffeur. They were to be alone.

Barry held open the door for her; tucked her in under the great fur lap robe.

"I have a scheme," he said, as he took the driver's seat. "No, an idea merely, since it must first be submitted to you."

"Submit it."

"It's that we shall run out into the country for an hour or two, come back, and dine quietly somewhere. You will?"

"I should dearly like to," she said impulsively. "I should love to, but—"

"Consider it settled, then."

"All right," she acquiesced suddenly with a sigh.

"Good!" said Barry gayly. The company was now coming out of the doorway en bloc and, as the young man turned the car away from the distant lights of town, some comedian cried:

"Hi-yi! You're losing your way." But the car glided off, gathering impetus speedily, and the girl turned back to wave, with a laughing face. Then they turned and were running up a lane, bordered with little villas, into more open country, gray with twilight.

"I shan't want to talk," she said.

"Then don't," he replied.

She leaned back, snuggling down beside him. Taking him at his word, she spoke not at all, but she thought drowsily: "It's nice to have a drive in a car that you don't earn by amusing a man all the time. This man is going to please me, not to demand that I shall please him." She recalled the brief drives to the city with Fairway when he had talked persistently of what he wanted, wheedled or bullied her into answering, arguing, always seizing her unwilling hand and caressing it under the rug.

This time she was sitting beside Barry hardly thinking about him, save in this way; musing idly about a hundred things—tiny things; remembering the

very thin girl in the company, who played a servant-maid part, and the comedian, who was funny in and out of season; thinking about the astonishingly ugly make-up; about food, clothes, the flat she would have in the future. And, touched by sorrow, she thought: "If only I had little Dickie to live with me now. She thought of yesterday's lunch, of the Marmions, of Basil. She wondered without conclusion, about the cold, cruel, and terrible world which was suddenly transformed into this amiable sphere in which she confidently felt that she could play at will with her own destiny. Barry, beside her, was a mere symbol of her good fortune. The drive *was* restful.

In an hour or so they were circling back to town. Nearer and nearer came the lights until they stretched into the rows that made avenues of lamps up and down the myriad streets. Through street after street, full of evening traffic, they wended till the traffic became almost solely that of dining, theater-going folk. Then only did Barry speak. He turned to her, and, smiling over the upturned collar of his motoring coat, asked.

"Well, is the dream dreamed? And where shall we go now?"

"Anywhere."

"The evening is still in my hands?"

"Entirely."

"Thank you," said Barry softly. He turned down St. James', and drove along Jermyn Street. "We can shove the car in here." He indicated a nearby garage. And soon they entered a small, quiet, white restaurant.

In the dressing room Fay looked triumphantly at the girl in the glass, as she lingered to pull out the curls over her ears under the close-fitting cap of black velvet; to soften with a dusting of powder the wind-lashed pink of her cheeks. She enjoyed the leisure and comfort of good service as the attendant placed this or that to her hand.

Barry had secured a table in a sheltered corner when she joined him.

"As a gourmet," he teased, proffering the menu, "I leave this part of the evening absolutely to you." They laughed together. And she chose an excellent dinner. He ordered red wine, the best Burgundy in the cellar. Soon they were talking, making up, with the eager generosity of youth and good fellowship, for the silence in the car.

"May we talk about yesterday, or is the subject taboo?" he asked.

And she replied:

"You may talk about anything you like to-night."

"Then, here goes," said the young man.

But, somehow, it didn't go. He paused, looked at her, looked away, and emptied his glass, as if for courage.

"You have been very good to me," said the girl, "so good that you may say anything you wish to say to me, ask any question you like, and I shall answer it as well as I can."

"Please don't say that I've been good to you," he begged.

"Do you know you are the nicest man I have ever met?" Fay's eyes were suddenly misty.

"Oh, rats!" he blurted out boyishly.

She smiled at his evident embarrassment.

"I know men——" Fay began.

"Some men," Barry corrected.

"All men!"

"Meaning that all men are alike?"

"Yes, perhaps I do mean that. There are minor differences, but, in the main, they're all alike."

"You're wrong."

With the full fruit of her young wisdom, she denied him.

"No, I am right."

"A man knows more about men than a woman does," he stated.

"He doesn't know more than a girl earning her own living in a great city."

"I think he does."

"Then I am glad I don't know more than I do," she said with a sigh and a little shivering shrug.

"In your rather wide statement," said Barry, "did you include me?"

"I mentioned that there were minor differences. In your case the differences are so many that you don't seem much like other men I have met."

"Tell me," said Barry, "did you think I asked you out to make love to you?"

"No, I didn't think you would."

"Is that really and truly so?"

"Really and truly."

"How did you know?"

"Well, most men wouldn't waste much time over beginning—if they meant to—with a girl like me," she answered truthfully.

"Now, what do you mean by that?" he demanded. "A 'girl like you?'"

"Well, yesterday you found me out. You found out I hadn't a sou, that I was shamefully hungry. To all effect, I was a thief. You found out I was—pretty desperate."

"But, good heavens——" he began indignantly; then his indignation trailed away. "Yes," he admitted ruefully, "I know. I know how it is. I am glad it was I who found out, as a matter of fact; I am glad it wasn't—well, even old Lyndon. I know. But I've a habit of looking at things——"

"Differently?"

"Well, fair and square, you know. Even where a woman is concerned." He looked at her smilingly, and her eyes met his as frankly. "There's one thing I can't understand, however," he went on. "When you came into our office you bluffed Lyndon and me. We never doubted for a moment that you were a spoiled darling hankering after a new sensation."

"That's what I meant you to think: that you had to tempt me to work, not that I was snatching at it."

"I know that now. But, then, you did it splendidly. We didn't guess. We

never should have guessed, unless Lyndon had made inquiries about you later, on his own, to satisfy his own curiosity, which 'he probably would have done. But by then, of course, you'd have been going all right. You had such an air of assurance; you carried those furs to the manner born. How, in Heaven's name, did you come to fail as a mannequin? What was the matter with you?"

"I was—frightened."

"Frightened?"

"Intimidated."

"Intimidated? But how?"

"A man I know——" she began. And even in the small, warm restaurant, full of light she stopped, with a tiny, inward shiver; the glowing light took on a colder hue and the shadow hung high up in the sky. Suddenly she thought of Fairway. He pervaded the place like a dark Fate.

"You were saying?" Barry prompted.

"There was a client who caused me to make a fool of myself."

"How can that be?" he inquired, leaning over to fill her glass.

But though his tone was only casually sympathetic his tanned skin darkened till the flush spread up to the roots of his hair. With her life training of wary observance of men, Fay saw the signs of his perturbation and guarded her tongue.

"Tell me, if you don't mind," he insisted.

At the mere thought of Fairway she found her heart beating so quickly that the pulse in her throat throbbed visibly. His eyes saw it; they were as keen as hers, and, looking away from her, he muttered:

"Has any one been troubling you? Some cad? Some awful blighter?"

She was quiet for a moment or two while a telepathic communication of mutual understanding passed between them.

"A man I knew," she began again,

"whom I didn't want to see, but who wanted to see me——"

The young man nodded gloomily; his expression was intensely serious.

"He found out I was at Basil's," she went on hesitantly, "and came there, ostensibly to give an order. Basil wanted that order; it was worth having. I was chosen to show some frocks of Oriental designs. And the man wanted to—queer me."

Barry leaned forward quickly.

"But why wasn't he trying to propitiate, to please and help you?" And, looking down, he added hastily: "The tactics are unusual."

"Pleasing and helping—all that was over."

"Over?"

"He is out to beat me."

"How?"

"He is awfully rich, influential. He means to edge me out of any job I get. He knows that girls like me are always on the edge of destitution. Usually there aren't more than five shillings between us and ruin."

"I don't follow this blighter's scheme," said the young man rather thickly.

"Am I not putting it to you simply? Let me try. He wants to edge me out of any job I get, follow me, dog me. Then, when I find he's too strong for me, he thinks——" Barry was silent. She finished after a pause, with the faintest of smiles: "He thinks I'll give in. He knows it."

"Don't say that."

"No. Not now. Not now that I find myself in clover for a while. But, supposing I'd failed with you!"

"Yes?"

"Supposing Basil had followed me to your office, and, judging I hadn't succeeded in getting what I'd come for, had handed me to the police for stealing the clothes——"

"Yes?"

"With my character for honesty gone, my job gone, what would I do then?"

"Heaven knows!" the young man muttered, much troubled.

"I'll tell you. I should have—surrendered to my bail."

"I don't understand."

"Oh, he would have squared Basil. It would have been easy for him," she explained.

"Yes, yes, I see." He saw her looking into a distance of the imagination. He saw what lay in her eyes. Quickly he touched her hands, lax on the table. "Don't think. It's over now."

"I believe so."

"Be sure of it. Remember, you can always command me."

Fay Brunie smiled at him. The smile was all at once sweet and gay.

"You make me feel less lonely," she confessed.

The waiter cleared the table and brought dessert, soft, glowing fruits: peaches and nectarines. The wine waiter brought an old and tawny port, and poured it reverently. Then talk faded and dreams took its place, formless dreams, born of romance, wine, and the night, but all the same beautiful.

Barry took up a peach.

"Let me peel this for you," he said, and began the task, while she watched him, satisfied. But his heart was not light and she knew it.

He was very slow over the task.

"There," he said at last, putting the fruit on her plate.

She ate it with enjoyment, but for some time he did not touch the peach which he had taken for himself. He put his elbow on the table, his chin on his hands, and watched her. Looking up, she met his eyes and knew that she had troubled him greatly.

"This has been a nice evening," he said inadequately, responding to her quick glance.

"It ends a perfect day," she smiled.

"You wait till we've worked you hard for weeks and weeks," he warned.

"I shall love it all the time."

"I wonder," he murmured absently. His mind was still on their conversation and soon he said softly: "I wish you'd tell me more about yourself."

"I'd rather not, Mr. Barry," she said.

"All right. Your wish is law."

So, slowly, they came to the end of dinner, to the end of the full day. And then they went out into the frosty night.

There were stars above the streets, but the lamps outblazed them. The cold, pure lights of heaven hung far above. Far over the city's haze the sky was inky blue. The air was keen with frost. It was so late, they had lingered so long over dinner, that already most of the theater audiences were pouring into the streets. The garage man brought out the car and soon Fay was again snuggled in the warm robe beside Barry. Suddenly she laughed.

He turned his head quickly.

"What is it?" he questioned in a voice unwittingly tender.

"I'm just remembering something. I live in a sort of a woman's club. It's very cheap; there's much for the money, but, in order that there shall not be too much, that the priceless commodity of liberty shan't go cheap, it makes stringent rules. A girl must ask one of the managers for permission to be out until eleven; after eleven, whether she has permission or not, she pays a fine of sixpence."

The young man laughed, too.

"That's how the poor live," said the girl dreamily, snuggling under the rug.

"It will be after eleven by the time I get you there."

"I shall pay sixpence. It doesn't matter," she assured him.

"That's the spirit! Splendid!" he cried.

"You do not know how splendid it is," Fay said, "to be able to pay the fine."

They came at last to the bleak house. He stood for a moment beside her, holding her hand.

"To-morrow?" he said, with a questioning smile.

"To-morrow," she nodded, looking at him with grave and guarded eyes.

She drew her hand from his, mounted the steps, and rang the bell. He waited below in the car until the door opened, and his sense of humor, if he were waiting there to satisfy it, might have received dull satisfaction at seeing the custodian of girlish morale peer out and down upon him as she held the door. Then Fay Brunie disappeared within.

He drove home light-heartedly, and let himself into his flat, humming gayly. He felt exuberant, exhilarated, in that blissful state beyond dreams, far from reality. In the hall, shedding motoring coat and cap into the hands of his man, he told himself, half ruefully recognizing the symptoms, that he had been in love a dozen times before.

"What will you take, sir?" the servant asked.

He stared at the man, assimilating the question slowly.

"Nothing, nothing!" he said impatiently, then added: "Oh, well, whisky and soda." The servant, who had a sad, sympathetic sort of countenance, eminently suited to the reception of a young man in such a frame of mind, brought the tray to the smoking room.

Barry cast himself into an armchair of great length and depth.

As he felt in the pocket of his coat for tobacco pouch and pipe he began to think more seriously of life in regard to women than he could ever remember having thought before. Often he had helped some poor, pretty girl who was down on her luck. Though Cynthia Marmion might have said, with a giggle, "Oh, John Barry? He's a devil," no woman could ever say that he was not a sportsman, too. Like all idle, rich young men, he loved the game of so-called love, but he played it fairly and squarely. And sitting before the bla-

fire, with his pipe between his teeth, he thought savagely of the man of Fay's story, who obviously hadn't. And as he thought of him over and over, his blood beat a tune of rage.

And then he thought of Fay herself, the way she walked, the trick she had of smiling slowly, the thick darkness of her hair and eyes, the warmth of her skin, and he realized that she, too, was different. He was thinking of her when the telephone bell near him rang suddenly. He could reach the instrument from his seat in the big chair.

"Hello."

"Hello," said Lyndon's voice. "That you, John? I'm telephoning from the club. I've just had dinner here with Fairway, Charles Fairway. He wants to come in with us and I must say his scheme's simply wonderful. It would

be a very big thing. I don't want to say what it is now; but—can you meet us for lunch to-morrow?"

"Why, sure," said Barry. "Wonderful chap, isn't he?"

He heard Lyndon chuckle.

"Great! I should think so. You wait till you hear what he has to say. Would you like to take a taxi and come around to my place now, and I'll bring him along? The night's young."

"Busy," said Barry, "very busy."

"Liar," the cheerful Lyndon replied. "To-morrow, then. G'by."

Barry hung up the receiver, leaned back, and continued his absorbing business: the analysis of love, new love, the only real love of his life, the best, the first. He told himself all this and much more, quickly, savagely, and elatedly, as he sat there gazing into the fire.

TO BE CONTINUED.

LADY MAXWELL, whose estate in Buckinghamshire, England, was once the home of Anne Boleyn, recently arrived in San Francisco. Lady Maxwell has two hobbies—traveling and collecting gowns. She is, on her third tour around the world, and she has made a collection of gowns from every city she has visited during her travels.

IT is easy to determine the tribe to which a man or woman of Central Africa belongs by a glance at his or her teeth. In childhood the teeth of these primitive peoples are filed and fantastically colored. The women of some of the tribes, in particular, present veritable rainbows when they smile, having one tooth of green, another of yellow, a third of purple, and so on—with here and there a white tooth for contrast. Also, they stain fingers, toes, and hair, carrying out the chromatic color scheme.

THE women of London are rebelling at the high cost of powdering their noses. Recently the city of Westminster determined to "draw the veil" over all dressing-room mirrors, and soon after the edict went forth curtains appeared over these indispensable adjuncts to the toilette. London followed the example set by Westminster and now for two pence—four cents in our money—one may prevail upon an attendant to raise the curtain for a tuppenny look at one's self. It is even more expensive if milady wishes to wash her hands or rearrange her disheveled hair.

At this rate, a "ten-pound look" will not be uncommon in England from now on, for one thing does lead to another in the matter of making one's self fit.
9—Ains.



Nora's Story

By Ernest L. Starr

Author of "The Worst Man in Europe,"
"Madame Staminov," etc.



IT is Nora's story because she had a way of filling the lives of the little group around her, of swaying them at the very moment they were guiding her. They began to realize it on that disastrous day when Colonel Alvin Edington, her guardian, made up his mind about her future—without consulting Nora.

The strange thing about the day was the way Colonel Edington squandered his priceless hours. He kept two banker associates waiting all morning. An international transaction was perilously held up. It had to do with the financing of the American branch of an English producing house, soap, I think, or soda—it makes no difference.

First he talked with Madame Marie Edington, his mother. Nine o'clock found madame as immaculate and real-laced as late afternoon. She was one of those delightful old ladies who seem to be ready to pour tea at any hour of the day. One couldn't object to her early morning display of jewels at ears, hands, and neck because they fitted so perfectly with her gray taffeta and rose point. All that was needed was a little lace cap, but Madame Edington was far too careful of her lovely white hair, meticulously arranged, to cover it so antiquely. Out in Chestnut Hill they began to call her madame when there was another Mrs. Edington in the house. That was long ago, but the title held;

and somehow it seemed particularly appropriate and deferential.

"Mother," said the colonel, kissing her cheek, "I think I have it all straightened out."

"Yes, Alvin," said Madame Edington. She smiled indulgently, which did not at all prove that she understood what her well-known son was straightening. She asked few questions, and consequently found out a great deal.

"About Nora, mother," Edington added. "I think I've found the solution."

Edington might have been eight and twenty instead of a little more than forty. There was warmth and force about him. One got it in the way he held himself, the clean cut of his chin and the clearness of his eyes, which gave the impression of seeing straight and far. Only the people who crossed his will found them—and him—hard.

His mother observed him shrewdly.

"You mean marriage?"

Edington nodded.

"Young Merton," he said.

Madame Edington was thoughtful.

"The son of the maple-sugar millionaire," she mused. "I've heard a great deal of him. It's a good match, unless—" There was a world of meaning in her hesitation.

"Unless what, mother?"

"Unless you consider his weaknesses, and their probable effects on Nora."

Colonel Edington's face showed the expression known only to those who ventured to cross his judgment.

"I wouldn't admit that Nora might be influenced by him," he objected.

"No, you aren't given to such admissions, my boy. But Nora has enough to overcome, without being married out of hand to some one who will probably encourage every trait she wants to grow away from."

"You surprise me, mother."

"No," replied Madame Edington, "not really. You may be surprised at my knowing about Merton's escapades, but not at my feeling as I do. You see, I read the *Transcript* for enlightenment and the Sunday supplements for adventure. One must keep the emotions young. If Ted Merton and his family have missed a month this year, I'm a very much mistaken old lady."

"That's merely scandal, mother."

"Scandal, Alvin, is other people's troubles.—And what I read makes me realize that others have their worries!"

"If that's keeping your emotions young," Edington agreed, "I dare say you're succeeding. As a matter of fact, young Merton's father is a very close friend of mine. The entire situation is understood between us."

Colonel Edington had once said that even his mother was afraid of him. The pride of that statement must have been a bit shaken by the opposition that sparkled for the moment in Madame Edington's face.

"It sounds almost medieval, Alvin. Nora's marriage is arranged by you and Mr. Merton. Ten to one you've said nothing to her. Nora would have told me. Therefore it isn't a thing that she wants, and there's no one to profit from it except you."

"Oh, yes, there's Nora," Edington said.

"She's well enough as she is," replied his mother. "Why hurry her? She's only eighteen. Give her a chance."

Edington put an impressive quality of rebuke into his reply.

"That's just what I've been doing for the past two years. You know what I lifted her from. I can't see how you'd doubt my affection for her."

"I don't," his mother answered. "Neither do I doubt your affection for yourself. Whatever profit there may be in this for you, I don't want you to think that your responsibility to Nora is ended. I'm sure I'll feel mine even more than before." Madame Edington leaned back as if she were relieved to have it said. She touched her hair with decisive little gestures and folded her hands firmly. "I hope Nora doesn't marry him," she said finally. Then, with the wish fathering the thought, she added: "I'm sure she won't."

The colonel didn't answer. His revered mother usually gave him a mental shock—stimulating, but about as welcome as cold water down one's collar. He watched her meditatively. Perhaps he was marveling at the directness of her imaginative system. If so, it made him recall his conference with the elder Merton the evening before.

That had lasted late into the night. In the end, the autonomy of the Merton millions was preserved for at least another generation and the encroachment of an opposing corporation put at nothing through the financial aid and advice which Colonel Alvin Edington had given to the elder Merton.

When the thing was settled and out of the way their talk had reverted to those earlier days when Edington was a rising corporation attorney and Merton a gentleman farmer, with a longing eye on every New England tree that gave off a certain magic, saccharine juice. Each had grown with the passing years. Edington had been true to a high ideal. He had touched his zenith of desire. Merton had stretched out a longing hand to every primrose along his path; had clothed his loves in

the dear, green gown of satiety. When the shoulder-to-shoulder wife of his growing period passed on, he married the governess who had been established the year before in their Vermont country place.

Governing wasn't exactly the second Mrs. Merton's forte, except through the allurements of her very charming person. So it happened that her boy grew up mostly by himself.

He remembered a succession of schools and no end of tutored vacations spent everywhere except at home. There followed a hard-earned graduation from Yale, tutored to the bitter end; then a phantasmagoric year of freedom, self-financed, through funds which the elder Merton settled on him when he won that famous bachelor's degree *sine laude*. To all intents his aim was speed, and without a doubt he achieved his ambition—in motors, momentum, ladies, and life.

"He's exactly what I was at twenty-two," his father confided to Colonel Edington, "only more so. Mad as a Danbury hatter!"

This gave the colonel the opening he sought. Their two heads went together, and after a while a covenant was settled which assured Colonel Edington of a very lasting interest in the transaction he had undertaken.

"The very thing for him!" exclaimed Mr. Merton. "It will bring him down to earth. Nothing like responsibility and children, and all that, for a lad like Ted. But what will your Nora say?" he inquired, quite as an afterthought.

"Nora?" Edington replied. Something personal and deep-felt came into his face. "Nora will do what she believes I want her to; but please understand, Merton, that unless it means happiness for her, I want none of it."

For the past two years he had been responsible for Nora. He had taken her from Gerry Edington, her aunt, that other Mrs. Edington whose by-

gone presence in the home had given Madame Edington her title. Seeing what the laxness and bravado of Gerry's way of living were doing to Nora, he had brought her into his own well-ordered household in order to be sure that her young life was not completely spoiled by its environment. He wasn't a bit of a philanthropist, but in Nora he saw the pale flush of sweetness and strength such as she herself would probably have been the last to admit. So lonely and undernourished had been the girl's inner life, that his heart must have gone out to her with something greater than a guardian's regard, no matter how conscientiously he may have wished to preserve that relation.

He undoubtedly believed that the contentment he spread around her would counteract the unhappy confusion of her habits of thought and living. Her reticence baffled him, just as her sudden sophistication closed his lips through its blurring boldness. He never tired of studying her, yet invariably he shook his head hopelessly, as if this enigma were one he despaired of ever solving. One thing he knew, and that was Nora's absolute devotion to himself—a freer, finer thing than had ever blossomed forth in her oddly warped young life.

"I'll be responsible for her," he repeated.

Edington was an international financier at forty. To him a certified contract, a stock issue disposed of, stood for the successful termination of a well-planned deal. He assumed nothing which could not be terminated to the credit of his name. Not being married, he considered marriage a contract of accepted desirability; and since he had seen the value of the personal relation proven in big business time and again, he probably had no doubt as to the agreeableness of the thing he had undertaken, or of his ability to put it over.

So he took leave of his mother, went

out to the waiting car, gave the chauffeur the address of Gerry Edington, his elder brother's widow. No matter what else she was, as Nora's closest relative, one who had given her motherhood of sorts, since the death of her parents, Gerry would have to be informed of the thing he had in mind. The distance from Chestnut Hill to her Commonwealth Avenue apartment must have dragged out interminably, if the inevitable distaste with which he anticipated the interview were a criterion.

"Mrs. Edington is in the sun room on the roof, sir," a servant told him.

The place was a blaze of light, from the winter sun which poured through the clear, glass roof, and the furnishings gleamed with the rich, creamy lustre of heavy silk and uncut velvet. The color spot was Gerry Edington, swathed in some Far Eastern stuff of brilliant blue. She was stretched on a couch, her flaming hair thrown back over the pillows, her face turned unfalteringly up to the winter sky. One hand trailed the floor with a cigarette between the fingers. The other held an empty glass.

"Good morning, Gerry," said Edington.

Mrs. Edington got to her elbow, and gave him a mocking little smile of greeting. She was just Edington's age. With very little effort on her own part, her face had kept its full smoothness and her skin its satin perfection. Lines around the eyes, yes, but such little ones, hardly noticeable in this full light.

She struck a gong and said:

"I've ordered gin 'n milk for you. One ring always means liquor here. You'll have it, of course?"

"No thanks, not so early in the day."

"It's good for you, Alvin, gin and milk. You see the milk nourishes you, and the gin makes you aware of the fact that you didn't die yesterday, after all. You see?"

"Quite."

Gerry lifted her head by locking her hands behind it.

"What are you doing here this time o' day, Alvin? Very s'prisin' for you," she said; then added solemnly: "I don't like these habits you're forming."

"You'd hardly call this a habit, would you, Gerry?"

"No," said Mrs. Edington down-rightly. "You pay little enough attention to me."

The servant brought the drinks. Gerry held one out to Edington and, when he refused, drank it herself. The other she held, sipping it slowly, saying now and then, "'S good, Alvin."

Edington shook his head consistently. "Except the first of every month," Gerry continued, "and I do appreciate that. Check never fails, does it? Just as regular as bills. Come on over by me. You seem so far away. Nò? But I do appreciate it, Alvin."

"That's good. Gerry, I've something important to tell you."

When he finished Edington had a tempest of motherlike solicitude to quell. It was a new rôle for Gerry. Under other conditions Edington would have found it both surprising and welcome, but to-day it drove him from irritation to amusement.

"My Nora, my li'l girl, married!"

"Get down to earth, Gerry," commanded Edington. "You haven't worried over Nora for a good while. Don't start now."

"Why?" Gerry whimpered. "Because you took her away from me—the only thing I had to love!"

"Rot!" said Edington. "Would you have had her grow up like you? Be sensible."

Gerry got unsteadily to her feet.

"Wha's wrong with me?" she cried, her soft skin flushed with a new grievance. Her vivid hair framed her face like a flame. "Between the lot of you, you've made a mess of my life. Some day," she went on, "you'll learn that

you can't dispose of other people's lives as if they were so much currency to buy your wishes with."

"Of course," said Edington soothingly. "But all I ask of you to-day is, don't tell Nora. Let me work it out in my own way."

As he left the room Gerry informed him frankly that it was "a damn selfish way," then struck the silver gong and sank limply back, waiting for the next glass of morning cheer.

Edington told his driver to take him back to the Chestnut Hill house for a moment, before going down to his office. He would have his talk with Nora before the business of the day began.

He found her in riding clothes, ready to go out—a straight, finely molded young figure, hair drawn smoothly back under a three-cornered hat. Her skin was wonderfully clear, and there was a most agreeable curving tilt to her lips.

"I thought you'd gone to the office," she said.

"I wanted to see you first. I've been thinking of you, Nora," he added gently.

Nora smiled faintly. She came close and touched him with gentle, appreciative fingers. She seemed very young, very needful of safeguarding love, as she stood silently before him. She gave the impression of waiting for what life had to give, of being very uncertain of finding any joy in the gift, yet ready to adapt it as best she could to her needs.

"Thanks—Alvin," she said at length, hesitating appreciably before his name. He had never let her call him anything else. With no relationship between them except that of guardianship by accord, he had tried in many ways to avoid stressing the difference between their ages.

"Yesterday, in Hollander's window, I saw some clothes that looked as if they'd come direct from Paris," said Edington. "Would you care to look them over, and get what you like?"

"I don't need anything specially,"

Nora answered, "but I'd love to get them, if you want me to."

"Do, my dear. I want you have them."

Edington bent quickly and kissed her. He must have carried away the memory of a momentary glow of happiness which shone in her face, only to be covered up at once by the reticence which was characteristic of her.

He had watched the spectacular descent of Gerry Edington, the only mother Nora had known. He had seen the wreck Gerry made of her own life and that of Fred Edington, his brother. During those last bitter days of his brother's life he had stood by splendidly. Then he saw Gerry's lapse into compromise with every convention. As best he could, he had covered it up, for the name's sake. He kept his hands off until he realized the subtle venom that Gerry's life was instilling into Nora. He met the situation with a vigor such as Gerry had never known. The law he laid down depended, it is true, on money, checks, allowance—what he would do if he had his way and what Gerry would lose if he didn't.

At sixteen Nora came to live with Madame Edington and himself. And from the start her thought seemed to be to fit into the place and into Edington's life as unobtrusively as possible.

Balancing her strangely experienced outlook was the youth that lay within her heart, so starved of gentleness and sympathy that the contradiction of the thing was tragic. Gerry had given her nothing, yet kept nothing from her. Nora was as familiar with Gerry's liquors as with her lovers. She knew the language of license if not its deeper-shaded meanings; and she knew the lolling, drifting unrestraint that marks many segments of society.

Edington had every reason to admit his gratification because of the changes which the past two years had wrought. Evidently he had depended on her un-

dernourished self first to institute a comparison which would make the life he offered shine by contrast, then to take to itself the gentleness and repression which he believed in—for women. How deep the old environment had bitten he could not know, because in Nora restraint amounted almost to secretiveness. An hour later he telephoned his home from the office. He was told that Nora's aunt had sent for her. He called up Gerry.

"Don't forget you promised not to tell Nora," he said.

"I didn't!" Gerry snapped. "I never promise anything. I'll tell her what I please."

Then Edington grew emphatic. The best he got from Gerry was defiance. That was Gerry's way.

Nora sat very quiet. She had been listening intently. She discounted this display of motherly interest because it often came on when Gerry was in her present condition. The facts, just as they were, held her so still that even breathing was prodigious.

Edington wanted to get rid of her. He was sick of his bargain. As an investment she hadn't paid. She'd failed to measure up. He was through. He wanted her to marry—and get out.

"I guess I will have something to drink, after all," Nora said at length, abruptly.

"That's good," Gerry approved. "What'll it be?"

"Anything," Nora said. "Just make it snappy—and strong."

Gerry banged enthusiastically at her gong.

They hadn't drunk together for a long, long while and the gong pealed out at very regular intervals thereafter.

Nora listened with increasing moroseness. She slumped back in her chair, with her booted legs stretched out laxly. Her drinks fell short of exhilaration. They made her miserable, put a cutting

edge on the agony of introspection that deluged her.

"It's ruthless, that's what it is," said Gerry in conclusion.

"He doesn't mean it that way," Nora answered.

Gerry had brought herself to the verge of tears again.

"Disposing of your heart as if he owned it! My little Nora, my baby! C'mon over here, dear, you seem s' far away."

"Be yourself, Aunt Gerry," Nora scoffed. "Where do you get that?"

"Don't you love me any more?" "Oh, of course!" said Nora impatiently.

She had slipped back with amazing strides to the youthless child whom Edington had taken. High spots out of the interim shone briefly before her: things she had done to please him, the other kinds of things she hadn't done and hadn't said, the subjective viewpoint she had tried to keep paramount, all because she wanted more than anything in the world to justify his faith.

In a blaze of anger she threw her tricorn hat to the floor, and cried:

"I won't do it!"

Gerry looked at her solemnly.

"At's the spirit!" she cried, and trailed uncertainly across the floor to place a proud kiss on Nora's brow. Then her mind veered suddenly. "But take the clothes anyhow, baby," she added. "I don't believe in refusing a gift, no matter what's the intention behind it."

Sobered by luncheon, Gerry insisted on directing the purchases. They were voluminous and extravagant. When Gerry's luxurious soul was sated—Nora had been absorbed in her own thoughts most of the afternoon, her eyes heavy with wonder and pain—they returned to Gerry's for tea. But it wasn't tea they drank. And when Nora reached home an hour and a half later she had to face both Madame

Marie and Edington. They asked no questions; her condition was too deplorably apparent. There was just a shocked "Nora!" from each.

"Well?" said Nora sullenly.

"I think you'd better go to your room," said Madame Edington.

"That's a wonderful thought," Nora agreed.

"Shall I send in dinner?" asked Edington.

"All I want," said Nora weakly, "is—to—lie down."

Edington picked her up and carried her to bed. His mother made her comfortable and came out of the room shaking her white head as if the ways of the younger generation was too frightful a problem to cope with.

After dinner Edington drove out to the Mertons'. Usually the place bored him immeasurably, with its maple-sugar house, maple-sugar Italian gardens, and maple-sirup lake. To-night he looked it over with a far more appreciative eye, as if he were fitting Nora into it.

He talked with both Mr. and Mrs. Merton, talked at length and in considerable detail. There was perfect accord between the three of them. That night Mrs. Merton told her maid to have her things packed and ready for a trip to Bermuda in two days' time.

Nora did not see Edington until dinner the next evening. She spent the morning in bed, midday in the hands of a masseuse, and afternoon in her roadster trying to get the last of the ache blown away from her head.

To-day's arraignment of Gerry was so uncompromising that she was almost inclined to doubt the whole story she had heard.

She knew Ted Merton no better than she knew half a dozen other young men. She had been to dances with him, house-partied at some of the same places, talked nonsense—but so had she with the others. They had never singled out each other for inconsequential

ecstasies. On the contrary, she was sure that Ted thought her slow on the uptake. She meant to be. The entire younger game seemed futile and over-egoized to Nora. She knew too much to take it seriously.

Ted was too sure, too speedy, too broad. To him humor was always insinuation, and at his own he laughed immoderately. He went too far for Nora, though her education in this modern form of wit had not been neglected. All in all, Ted Merton was her unlikeliest selection for a lover. She felt, too, that she could make him about as happy as milk after Martini.

It couldn't be true. Edington knew all this. He wouldn't even want her to make a try at liking some one whom she couldn't see at all. Besides, such things weren't done to-day. That was flat.

Yet deep in her heart was a powerful sense of obligation to Edington, strong even as her love for him. He had taken her bodily out of conditions which she had learned to despise, to-day more than ever, with the smirch of overindulgence still hurting her. Perhaps he was hard in business, but that was business. It had brought him success. She knew the other man in him, the man who had come to her door night after night just to ask if she were comfortable and happy; the man who read and talked with her about things fine and vital; the man beneath the polished surface which other people saw.

Almost anything he asked for, she knew that she would give, but not this. She told herself he wouldn't want it. Impossible! If what Gerry said were true, he must have had very plausible reasons for thinking of it, for even wishing it would come to pass. But he wouldn't ask it. Not possibly.

They met at dinner quite as if nothing had happened. No reference was made to the evening before. Gerry was

a myth, as far as her existence touched them to-night.

"One of the new gowns?" Edington observed.

"Like it?"

"Um, lovely."

Nora found the hour quite breathlessly happy. At first her desire to atone and satisfy took away something of her ease. She originated but little of the conversation. Soon she realized that Edington was thinking of to-day as to-day, which is by far the most comfortable way to handle life, to say nothing of dinner talk. Her whole expanding personality went out to him in appreciation. She was facing the man whom no one knew quite so well as herself. She felt confident, secure.

Would you like to go South somewhere?" Edington said suddenly, over the coffee.

"It would be nice," Nora said, "if you went, too."

"I can't, because the pressure's strong just now. But I thought perhaps you'd enjoy Bermuda."

"Do you want me to go?" asked Nora. "Would I like it?"

"Of course you would. I saw the Mertons last night. Mrs. Merton is going and she'd love to have you with her."

"I hardly know Mrs. Merton," Nora said. The very name brought her up sharply. As soon as she heard it she wanted to swing every opposing reason into play.

"She's quite agreeable."

"So I've heard."

"She sent you a very pleasant invitation."

"Yes?"

"Through me—last night."

"Yes?"

"Of course, if——"

"I'd love to go," Nora said, "if it seems best, but why with her?"

"I shouldn't want you to go alone."

"No."

"And I don't know any one else who's going."

"I see." After a moment Nora added: "If you don't mind——"

"But I do," Edington broke in. "The change will do you good."

Nora felt as if she were swimming against a channel current. The thing had come on so suddenly, after an infinitely reassuring interlude. She wasn't ready for it. She wanted to protest, to oppose, to issue an ultimatum.

"Is Mr. Merton going?" she asked instead.

"No."

"Ted?"

"I don't know," said Edington indifferently. "Perhaps. Would you like him to?"

Afterward Nora wondered why she did not use this opportunity to tell him what she thought of Ted and to explain that she would never feel differently. She cursed her cowardice. Her intense desire to say and feel and live what Edington desired kept her silent. She did not think then that silence could carry her into concurrence of the most final sort.

"You have clothes enough, haven't you?" Edington inquired.

"Oh, yes."

"Don't you think you'd like to go?" Edington urged, as if the last difficulty had been smoothed away.

Nora searched his face. Kindliness, something of anxiety, deference, these were what she saw. Perhaps he was afraid of the future, unsure that he had overcome her heritage. This might be his way of rendering her the greatest service in his power, of making her secure in days to come. There was no harm in agreeing, in trying the thing out for herself. She could keep it short of the irrevocable.

"I'll go," she said.

It was close to midnight when she saw him again. She came out of her

room, all chiffon and lace, and found him at his desk in the study.

"Ted is going, isn't he?" she asked directly.

Edington did not reply at once. He couldn't have doubted the reasoning that brought the question out. Nor could he have known the conflict that had raged through Nora's mind for the past two hours.

Nora felt as if an infinite loss or gain hung on his answer. She slipped into a seat beside him, fixing her eyes on him so earnestly, with such frank and devoted yearning, that any one but a blind man would have read her thoughts and adored her for them.

Instead of searching out this little bit of heaven, as he could have, Edington looked away, after one quick, sweeping survey of her face. Nora felt him grow suddenly firm. His lips tightened; his chin went hard and square.

"Yes," he replied.

Nora leaned closer.

"And you're sure you want me to go?" she said. Her cheeks flamed like a banner flaunted gloriously before the world.

"Yes, Nora," Edington told her, his face still averted.

Nora rose quickly, moved away, paused. Then she came back to him, standing behind the chair.

"I've been so happy here, Alvin," she said hesitantly. "I wanted to tell you—to-night; and to thank you—for everything."

His hand went up to hers, which lay on his shoulder. He smoothed it silently. She bent her head. Her lips touched his hair, then his cheek, soft as an errant air that comes and blows away unheeded.

"Good night, Alvin," she whispered.

At the door she glanced briefly back. Edington was looking straight ahead of him, his fine profile cut squarely by the light of the desk lamp. She closed the door noiselessly.

Next morning Nora accepted Mrs. Merton's invitation as if it were her dearest wish. Then she made an immediate appointment with Ted. She picked him up at his "office," in the Merton Building, a place which Ted found useful for receiving very personal letters and telephone messages. He made a point of being there at least one hour of every morning. Then they shot out Commonwealth Avenue, Nora handling the roadster so smoothly that Ted was compelled to observe:

"Couldn't do it better myself."

With a clear road in front of them, Nora slowed down a bit and engaged Mr. Theodore Merton in a singularly direct conversation.

"You know what's ahead of us, Ted?"

"I suspect. That is, father has hinted quite definitely."

"It's too damn bad," observed Nora.

"Do I get you clearly?" Ted inquired, with a disbelieving grin.

"Just as we were both having so much fun—separately," Nora explained.

"Still we might have it together," said Ted.

"Might we?" Nora laughed.

Under her smile lay a bitter protest against what he meant, what he was, and what he was going to be to her. She would have given a great deal to see him as romantically alluring and all that sort of thing; but she knew too much about him. She couldn't forgive his neck, plump and overred. His eyes seemed to rove far too inquiringly over her. Good looking, yes, of course he was, but insufferably reliant on just that, and his proven powers of beguilement.

"Why do we take your mother with us, Ted?" Nora asked him.

Ted was speechless for once in his Lucullan life. He gave Nora, however, a steady and investigative eye.

"You think fast, my pretty," he said.

"I had an idea I didn't lose a great deal

of time myself, but, lady, let me say that you are prompt! I take it that you feel not only the humor, but the drama of the situation."

"Precisely, Ted!"

"And that, since there is a marriage in the offing, we needn't wait until we are outside the three-mile limit. Am I right?"

"Marvelous!" Nora exclaimed.

"I bow to you," said Ted.

"Since it's what they want, we'll get it for them, eh, Ted?" Nora's voice was trembling a bit, but she turned it into laughter that rang delightfully along the road ahead.

"You bet!" Ted beamed. Then his face fell as he recollected an important fact. "The five-day law! Takes that to get married in Massachusetts." Suddenly he smiled again. "But then there's Connecticut! Are you game?"

"How long will it take to go?"

"There and back in six hours," Ted replied, "unless we come back to-morrow."

"To-day, to-day!" said Nora. "There's a lot to do if we're to sail to-morrow."

Ted's face was glowing.

"Then step on it, old dear," he called, "and when you're tired hand her to me." He added anxiously: "But what'll we do for liquor?"

Nora opened a side pocket and showed him two enormous flasks.

"Ah," Ted exclaimed, "I'll say we are beginning wonderfully!"

Nora buttoned her coat closely, pulling its sable collar up close to her face. Her last look at Ted for many miles showed him resting comfortably on his spine with an overlarge flask clasped tenderly to his person. Then she gave him what he liked—speed. The faster she went, the harder something pulled at her heart. She felt as if it were an actual, physical thing, being stretched more hurtfully with every foot she sped away. It would break presently, but

now it hurt so dreadfully. Maybe it was the cutting wind that sent those uncontrollable tears down her cheeks.

Ted shifted to his own car when they got back to town, and Nora started home. Her body ached from the six-hour strain—she had not let Ted have the wheel at all. Her brain seemed as noisy and monotonous as the engine in her car. What she had done ought to seem momentous. Instead, it was merely wearisome. It didn't connect itself with anything that had ever happened in her life. It had never been anticipated, you see. She had done what she honestly reasoned was best. Perhaps Ted would help her through with it. Not likely, though. He had got a beautiful edge on the way home and said things she hated to remember. Perhaps Gerry—no, only herself.

It was almost dusk when she turned the car over to an attendant and walked slowly to the door, stopping to feel the golden zest that hung in the wintry air. The fading light, the hush that had dropped over the world, the solemnity of day's end in whispering twilight, smote her heart. She wanted to weep as she turned into the house.

"Where have you been, Nora?" Edington called to her from his study.

"Driving around with Ted Merton," she replied, stopping at the door. She tried to make the thing sound inconsequential.

"Enjoy it?"

"No. We went too far," she answered, with a bitter little smile on her face.

She had started to her room when Edington said:

"Come in, won't you? I want to talk to you."

Nora wanted only to be alone, to hide her face in the pillows and fight down this enormous protest that filled her. The end of a phase had come. A new relation had entered her life, one

which would supercede everything else. She wanted to take it in, clearly and finally. But she came into the room at Edington's request.

"What do you think of Ted?" he asked.

"I've thought very little of him, until yesterday," Nora answered quietly.

"And to-day, Nora?"

Her heart was a whirlpool of confused emotion. At the center, washed up by the surge of longing and regret, was the bitter realization of the unworthiness of this new obligation compared to what she had lost, had, in fact, never really wholly gained.

"To-day," she said, "I think I hate him."

"Then why not drop him?" Edington suggested. "What's the use of our wasting time with him? I've been thinking of many things to-day, Nora, and all of them together are just one thing, after all."

Nora watched his face soften as he looked at her. Something came into it that she had always wanted to see, something personal, warm, and fine. It was for her. It seemed to spread around her, to embrace her. Yesterday she would have glowed and quivered under its touch.

"I want to have a long, long talk with you," he said, "and to ask you something that has come to mean a very great deal to me."

Nora wanted to keep that smile forever. It was hurting her unbearably, but she held her peace just to keep the real avowal on his lips.

"You don't really want to go to Bermuda, do you?" he asked.

"No," Nora answered faintly.

"Then why not call it off?"

"I'm afraid I can't, Alvin."

"Why not?" he asked, his surprise verging on impatience.

"Ted and I were married this afternoon," she answered quietly.

Days came when Nora was sure she couldn't see it through. On the boat going down Ted had been put to bed drunk three nights out of the seven. Their waking hours were worse. Ted's brilliant career had been unadorned by anything as gentle as the thought of marriage. The newness of it seemed to delight him. He poured out his soul in unaccustomed raptures — particularly between two and four, when the ship's bar was closed.

Nora took no credit for her attitude. She was merely trying to play the game. For Ted she was infinitely sorry; for herself—she tried not to think or feel.

Once she drank too much with him. It loosed her tongue. She met him on exactly the level Ted reached under the urge of alcohol.

"You're a funny little thing," he observed.

"I am," Nora agreed. "I love to laugh at myself."

"Humph! I didn't think you'd be like this."

"Like what?"

"Oh, opinionated and cold-blooded."

"That's not fair, Ted."

"It's true, though."

"Do you think so, really?"

"Should say I do."

"I thought I'd been——" She closed her lips. What was the use?

"There's everything in starting right," Ted continued.

"Starting what?" Nora inquired.

"A happy married life," Ted sentimentalized.

Nora laughed shortly. Ted fixed his reddening eyes on her.

"Is that the way you feel about it?" he blurted. "Does the idea amuse you so?"

"It certainly does."

"Well, I'll be damned!" Ted exclaimed.

"Probably so."

"How much do you think of me, Nora?"

"I don't know you very well," Nora replied. "How much love was there between us before this happened?"

"But we're here!" Ted exclaimed.

"That's the sad part of it," said Nora.

"You're treating me abominably."

Then she turned.

"Very well," she said. "This little daily exercise in love-making is over from now on. Don't fool yourself into thinking that because we are here together we aren't the same two people who used to be there separately."

Ashore Ted found friends from the States. With them he discovered odd little cafés where potent things like green swizzles and planter's punches were brewed. He got in very late at nights, sometimes not at all. Once Nora saw him driving with a gaudy Frenchwoman.

Parties always, and Nora stuck to the game. She slept little and found herself vastly tired. The ache was always there. At times she was on the verge of leaving on one of the home boats which Ted continually ignored. But the thought of Edington kept her from it. She could not have submitted the life she was living now to Edington's appraisal, yet he remained as always the silent arbiter of her thoughts and dreams. She dropped deeper into the riotous life which Ted stirred up. There was nothing else to do. Ted laughed at any gesture of hers toward limitation or restraint. If she held back, she only let herself in for ugly argument. So she trailed rebelliously after him.

Finally came the night of that unforgettable beach party. Ted was host. He had picked his guests on the basis of their attitude toward useless conventions. It was staged in a rocky cove, miles outside the city. The shore curved round in a complete half circle. Backing the wide, white beach were rows of boulders which rose like a barrier, shutting the cove in securely. The encircled water was like a great, secluded

swimming pool. Its smooth surface was stabbed by innumerable, jagged rocks, sticking their heads up from no one knew what depths.

It was a fantastic crew. Ted called them "interesting" people. Nora thought them merely cheap. A good part of the food and at least half the drinks on the island had been brought out. After food came relaxation. Nora tried to close her eyes to what she saw when the bonfires suddenly blazed up. It sickened her. She wanted to get away, and when the swimming began she found her chance.

She swam far out to one of the jutting rocks. A ragged ledge was on its outward face. She pulled herself up. There was just room enough to lie full length and look out at the phosphorus-lighted sea. Behind her the increasing clamor of Ted's excited guests, shrill laughter, false, high-pitched exhilaration. Ted's voice she heard above them all. Ahead lay the endless water. She rested her head on her folded arms and sent her dreams out over it. The only thing between her and home—the sea.

Presently they missed her. She heard them calling for her. She didn't answer. She was too close to contentment to go back yet. They started to search. Ted's voice called:

"Nora, where are you?" For a moment everything was quiet. Then came a hurried lot of suggestions. She heard the swimmers starting out.

"Climb that high rock, Ted," some one called. "You can see better from there."

She smiled at Ted's swearing as he pulled himself up the side of the tallest rock in the cove.

"I don't see her," he called down. "Look out below there."

"Don't dive, Ted," said a voice. "There are rocks under the surface."

"It's all right," Ted answered.

"Don't dive, I tell you!" warned the voice.

Nora was instantly on her feet, all her strength in her voice as she cried:

"Here I am, Ted. Don't dive! It isn't safe. The rocks——"

A mighty splash. Silence. The sound of some one swimming rapidly. Then the voice that had warned him, filled with an agony of sorrow.

"Oh, God!" it cried.

Ted had struck his head against a jagged, submerged peak. He was dead before they got him to the shore.

Months later, after Nora and Madame Edington had returned from a long rest in England, madame said sharply to her son:

"You don't deserve it."

And Edington answered:

"I know I don't, but I want it, oh, so much."

Madame was standing in front of the drawing-room door, as if she were guarding Nora, who waited inside. Her fine old face softened beautifully as her hands went out to her son.

"You've been blind, blind, Alvin," she said. "I saw it long ago." She smiled her devotion for him. "It isn't too late," she whispered. "Go in and see for yourself."

It was a new and exquisite Nora he found. But the heart of her was the same, waiting, yearning.

"Nora," said Edington, and for a moment he could say nothing else. "Let me try to win your forgiveness," he begged finally. "And your love."

"You've always had that, Alvin," she answered. "You couldn't give it away." She was very close to him, with a fine, free light in her eyes. "It's been yours from the beginning," she said, "just as I've been."



SEA—SYMPATHY

THREE sounds of the sea: its roaring, lapping, hissing;

The rude momentum of a thunderous fate,

The tinkling sweet of tiny waves a-kissing,

And the harsh lisp of infinitesimal hate.

Three lights of the sea: far out a calm, blue glory

Where wonder's bravest pinions droop and tire;

White manes of monsters, fierce but transitory;

And the glad flash of rainbow-glinting fire.

Three tastes and touches of the sea: its coldness

That quells the coward's blood, its moist caress

Of pity, and the salt that whets to boldness

Each will that knows how bitter strife can bless.

Who must not say, with ocean in his ken,

God's hand is here to mold the minds of men?

CHARLES WHARTON STORK.



The Countess' Tragedy

By F. S. Coryn

THE Chinese ambassador leaned forward a little in his chair, his eyes upon his plate, and broke the impassive silence with which he had dined.

"That, I think, is true," he said softly. "Statecraft is not influenced by the tender passion as it was in other times. Politics, perhaps, but not statecraft."

The eyes of the ten or twelve guests seated round the table were turned curiously toward him. The new Chinese ambassador was an unknown—and therefore an interesting—quantity. And as yet he had committed himself to nothing, cloaking himself in silence.

Their hostess, the Countess of Gronmere, turned toward him with a smile. She was a beautiful woman. The light played on her copper hair, her white face, with its hint of tragedy behind the large, dark eyes, her neck and shoulders, like white marble against the black of her low-cut gown.

"Then you do not believe," she said smilingly, "that we poor women are much of a force in modern statecraft?"

The ambassador raised his head with a deprecatory gesture. In the mellow light his face looked yellow as parchment against the white of his shirt front. His almond eyes, half-closed, were upon his hostess, calm and impassive. But he was an old, old man and the years had left a hint of kindness in the corners of his mouth. He shook his head, touching his lips with his serviette.

"No, no," he said, his eyes dropping

again to his plate. "That is not what I mean. But love no longer drags the policies of the state into its service. We have no Mary, Queen of Scots. Love serves the state, but is no longer served by the state. That is woman's strength to-day."

He raised his eyes, meeting those of his hostess under cover of the general conversation. He looked long and hard into her face, leaning forward over the table. It seemed that life had suddenly leaped into those calm, inscrutable eyes, transforming them for an instant—almost that he was endeavoring to send her an unspoken message. Then the heavy lids dropped and the impassivity of the Oriental lay again like a cloud on his face.

The countess bit her lip, frowning a little, puzzled. It did not occur to her that the Chinaman's glance was meaningless. In the circles of diplomacy the signal for the creation or destruction of a nation might well have been conveyed by a far less meaning glance. Yet she felt that she had missed her cue; she did not understand.

"I do not quite agree with you," she said doubtfully. "There are exceptions to every rule." Her face seemed to have gone a shade paler as she spoke, and the tragic shadows hidden behind her eyes imperceptibly deepened.

The Chinese ambassador carefully arranged his knife and fork before he spoke. Then he leaned forward; scanned the faces of the company.

"If I may have the honor," he began

in a louder voice, "to monopolize your attention——"

The chatter of conversation died away under his inscrutable gaze. Every head was turned in his direction. His eyes dropped again to his plate, and he continued:

"It is a little story—not very long—of a woman who served the man she loved, destroyed a traitor, and saved her country, at the same time, from a war in which she would have been upon the wrong side. She was clever—a little; and she loved—much. By her cleverness she saved her country; by her love she had saved not even herself—yet."

For an instant he raised his heavy-lidded eyes; dropped them again. All eyes were fixed on him as he went smoothly on with his story, his yellow fingers playing absently with a silver spoon that glinted in the light, his eyes upon the table.

"Two men told me much of this story: one who died, after attempting to ruin his country; one who lived, after saving it. The rest I have pieced together, as accurately or inaccurately as may be. It is a story of state secrets, so that I may use no names; even the country which it concerns must remain a mystery.

"The first part of the story is simple: the old, old tale of a man's first love, a maid's first kiss, and the truth lightly given and heavily held. Neither of them knew then that they were to play the leading rôles in the destiny of the nation.

"They parted. Ambition, the heaviest taskmaster that ever held the whip over a man's head, drove him to the great cities. The lure of the courts, the power and prestige of national life, called to him with an irresistible lure. Above all, he loved his country with a poet's love—and his country had need, in those days, of a statesman.

"With the love of his country burn-

ing in his heart, he rose step by step. Difficulties fell away like shadows before the light of his indomitable will. Great patriots, dimly seeing in him the salvation of the nation, made way for him. At last the top rung of the ladder was beneath his feet. The people acclaimed him as a savior.

"In the meantime the woman—the girl rather, for she was no more—the girl he had left behind, smarting perhaps from some imagined neglect on the part of her lover, embroiled night and day in the affairs of a great country, had married. She, too, was ambitious, and, finding a title, wealth, and power, coupled with one of the greatest names in the country, offered for her taking, she grasped the opportunity and became the Countess of—Borogrove, let us say.

"A dark, evil, passionate man was the count, yet withal a great man, had he but chosen to place his country before himself, which he did not. He loved her in his own way," he went on, again playing absently with the silver spoon, "but I do not think, if I were a woman, that I should like to be loved in that way." He paused, choosing his words. His yellow, wrinkled face was very grave and very wise. "It is not necessary to follow them through the next ten years," he continued. "She discovered her mistake very soon. There were no children. Her lover—Stephen, let us call him—sought forgetfulness in hard and unremitting labor for the state. Only once he wrote her.

"And see what a little thing it is that changes the destinies of a nation! For the writing of that letter was the forging of a weapon, which, in the clever hands of a woman, was to hew down the enemies of the state, because the letter was not—*quite*—the letter which one should write, perhaps, to a married woman, however well-beloved. There was no harm in it, no wrong, but it was just a little unwise.

"Remember, the count loved his wife with a love which it is not always to a woman's credit to receive, and, as his love was not fulfilled, it endured. Otherwise, it would have burned itself out in a night and a day. This, also, was one of the little things which went to the making of a nation's destiny.

"For the count found that letter. There was nothing incriminating in it, nothing evil. It was but the cry of a hurt and broken heart, simple, inarticulate. But he read between the lines and understood—more than actually existed.

"The count was a man of ancient family, a gentleman in public. The letter inflamed him. Yet he could do nothing without bringing the rumor of scandal down upon his ancient and honorable name. The one thing upon the face of the earth which he loved more than himself was that ancient and honorable name, or, rather, the reputation which, tortured by the jealousy and hatred of the purely passionate man, he was to drag so deep into the filthiest mire, the mire of national treachery.

"Moreover, whatever action he might have meditated taking in the matter of the letter, public or private, there was no scrap of evidence to support him. The letter itself was nothing. It was only by a flash of intuition that he understood, grouping two and two together, and even then, to his misguided mind, the sum was five.

"Often, where there is a great evil, there is no evidence—so he meditated. Unfortunately, also, there is often much which may be twisted into the most damning evidence, where there is nothing but the purest innocence. But here it was not so. There was neither evil nor evidence of evil. And yet, so strange are the workings of some dark minds, this only made him the more determined to punish where there was no crime. Therefore, he struck at the only vulnerable spot—Stephen.

10—Ains.

"At the end of the ten years we find Stephen first minister of the crown, a giant and brilliant intellect, towering above the country like a colossus. The count became his bitterest and most unrelenting enemy—an enemy not without intellect, not without power, an enemy to be reckoned with. And in the background was the countess, cold, statuesque, and very, very beautiful.

"The flame of war was breaking out in Europe. Borogrove smiled and bided his time. He was a great statesman, with no country save his own ambitions and desires. Then his opportunity came. An agent of one of the warring powers was sent to him.

"For hours they were closeted together. No one, to this day, knows exactly what they said and did, except myself. How I learned is a matter which concerns no one. But whatever it was, it was the last brick in his structure, the last bolt in the weapon with which he was to attack and betray his own people, tempered and hardened by the desire that his rival might perish in the general destruction and his own name become great in the land. So are some men made. It is a matter of wonder to me that the powers of the universe allow such men the gift of the intellect with which to carry out their hideous ambitions.

"The countess was waiting for her husband in the library when the foreign agent left, and he went straight to her. He could not keep the triumph to himself; he must needs display it before those against whom the triumph is aimed, provided, of course, it can be safely done. His wife he thought helpless in the matter. Therefore, he went to insult her with his exultation.

"He entered the room sneering. She paid no heed to him. She knew that he would speak without encouragement from her; she knew his nature. He had come to gloat upon her.

"He seated himself upon the edge of

the table, swinging one leg and leering at her impudently, slapping his knee with the papers which he held in his hand, the papers which meant the ruin of his people—and Stephen.

"She knew that he had been working, working night and day, for Stephen's overthrow. She guessed, as only a woman can, something of the result of his interview with the foreign agent. She suspected vaguely that he was bargaining for his honor with a foreign government. She did not know till afterward. But the suspicion made her cautious.

"Presently she turned toward him, her eyes blazing, her face full of disdain, and he raised the papers and shook them before her eyes. His triumph could scarce find words to express itself, and for a moment he stammered inarticulately, his evil face working.

"Already, I believe, though I do not know"—for an instant the ambassador's eyes were raised; swept the faces about him, as though inquiringly—"I believe that a plan was coming to her. But she was clever. She bided her time.

"At last Borogrove mastered his voice.

"Do you see these?" he croaked. "Do you see these?"

"He unfolded the papers, and held them before her, one by one, with hands that shook. She scarce deigned to glance at them. She was holding herself. Yes, I am sure that plan was forming, or she would never have suffered his taunts. He did not give her time to read what was on the papers, though. He did not overtrust her loyalty to himself, though he had little enough cause to doubt it.

"These papers," he said exultingly, thrusting his face close to hers, "mark his grave—his *grave*, do you hear? With one blow, he will be gone, forgotten, disgraced, spat upon!"

"Still she said nothing. A man wiser in human nature would have wondered

at her silence, doubted it, suspected it. Only the strong can afford to be silent. But so eager was he in his triumph, so intoxicated with the prospect, that her silence only goaded him into a cold, passionate fury.

"Now," he said thickly, 'now where is your mighty Stephen, your prince of lovers, your paragon of all the virtues? Bah! Do you think I am blind? No, I have eyes to see and ears to hear. I have seen you flush at his name and exult in his triumphs. I can see you glorying in my downfall, so that you may cast me aside and go to him—me, your husband the rejected, the scorned, tossed out of your path! How do I know that he is not even now your lover?"

"Her face paled as he spoke those words, for she was in all things honorable. But still she remained silent.

"Now," he went on excitedly, 'now the great and mighty Stephen lies within the hollow of my hand. Will you go to him when he is ruined?' He laughed an ugly laugh. 'What woman goes to a ruined man?' he said. 'You would not. You could not. You are too careful, too fastidious. My name will be free from the dishonor of such a dirty scandal.'

"Yet, he spoke thus of the honor of his name, while actually in his pocket there lay his *pay* from a foreign government. Honor is a strange thing.

"All this while she had spoken no word. He noticed it at last, and began to be a little uneasy—afraid that he had said too much, that she would betray him to Stephen—warn him. For the game he played was played in the dark, and a warning would have let the light in upon it.

"He need not have been afraid of that. It was her woman's wit he should have feared. Yet that he ignored completely. You see, she was his wife and an honorable woman. Nothing could ever have induced her to betray her

husband. Herself she would have sacrificed, yes, as we shall see presently. She would fight him herself with all her woman's subtlety. But she never would have dishonored herself by betraying him to another. She was not sure that he was in the pay of a foreign government. Had she been sure of that, I believe she would have killed him, even if she had loved him dearly. But she would not have betrayed him. A woman's sense of honor is one of the most *complete*—and complex—conceptions that the mind can hold.

"At last Count Borogrove folded up his papers and moved to the door. From there he fired one parting shot.

"'One week from to-day,' he snarled, 'in the council I shall strike. Stephen will have fallen before nightfall.'

"And that was just one word too much. For, see again, upon what trivial matters the destinies of nations hang. As he spoke her plan leaped full-fledged into maturity, and, knowing him, she knew now when to strike."

The ambassador shifted the knife and fork on his plate with absent fingers.

"The week went by," he continued, "and she watched. She watched the newspapers, the speeches, the announcements; sifted the flying rumors that settle on governments, like flies upon carrion, when great things are pending—sifted them to their sources. Her fingers were upon the pulse of government and public alike. She was a clever woman and a beautiful woman, and ten years in political society had taught her many things; among others, that there is little to be hidden from a beautiful woman, if she is clever enough. More than all, she watched the count, and became convinced that he was prompted only by hatred of the minister and fear that his ancient and honorable name would be soiled by scandal. Here she made her only mistake, for foreign gold had much to do with his prompting, though not all.

"As I said before, even where there is no guilt, there is often matter which may be twisted by skilled fingers into the most damning evidence. Count Borogrove's fingers were very highly skilled. She understood that, and she began to perceive that it was in this manner that Stephen was to be dragged down. She began to hate her husband with a deadly hatred. But she bided her time.

"On the morning of the fateful day Count Borogrove went into his wife's apartments before going to the council. He came for a final gibe, to gloat once more over her seeming helplessness. And, so doing, he delivered himself into her hands.

"For a while she listened to him: his sneering contempt of Stephen, his ugly triumph, his insulting insinuations, and, more than all else, the glorification of his ancient and honorable name, which he sought to save from an utterly fictitious scandal by the destruction of a whole people, by the desecration of his own honor, by the foulest treachery of which the hand of man is capable. She listened quietly, and coldly, until he paused. Then she struck.

"She rose, her eyes blazing, her face a mask of white, her copper hair gleaming in the morning light. She spoke quietly, almost softly, but there was an edge to her voice that cut like chilled steel.

"'Borogrove,' she said, 'I have listened to you long enough. Now you must listen to me. I did not love you when I married you, but I thought you a charming and a courteous gentleman. I did not know that your charm was a sham, your courtesy a lesson studied and learned, to be cast aside when it pleased you, your love—bestial, yourself a brutal animal, with only the intellect of a man. But I have learned it well. I have learned it quickly, enduring tortures in the learning.

"'Yet I have held my position as

your wife with respect. Never in intention or deed have I been disloyal to you. What it has cost me God alone knows, for I have loved—loved with my whole heart and soul—and crushed it down. Now you come here to mock at me, and at a man who has done more in loyal service to his country than you have ever dreamed of doing. I say you *shall* not mock. He is in your power. And why? Because in your loathsome mind you imagine that he threatens the sanctity of your holy name with scandal. For that you will drag a great man from a high place, from a noble work, from the most utterly self-sacrificing adherence to duty—'

"That and much more she said, flaying him, whipping him with her words, with all her pent-up passion, with every thought or impulse that came into her mind, just or unjust, true or not, she flayed him. For she was fighting for time. It mattered little what she said, so that she held him. Yet there was little evil to be said of him which was not also true, had she but known it, and thus she found many joints in his armor unknowingly.

"At last, breathless, she paused, her bosom heaving, her eyes flashing. Borogrove had drawn away from her as she spoke and now stood facing her at the other side of the room, his face livid with rage, his lips moving inarticulately, his fingers working, as if he would have strangled her. But he had not the courage for that.

"At last he found his voice. I will not repeat what he said—the vilest abuse that ever came from human lips. Anger seized him by the neck and shook him to and fro."

The Chinese ambassador raised his eyes with a half-apologetic smile.

"That is something I can never understand," he said. "In my country, when we are angry or afraid, we cover it up, unless there is something to be gained by showing it—and it is rarely

that anything is to be gained by showing any emotion whatever. Fear and anger least of all. But he did not hide it, when it would have served him well to do so. Had he said and done nothing, he might even then have won. Also, she would have been a little afraid. A woman is never afraid of a man of action, the strong, tempestuous man. He will master her, but he will never make her afraid. But when a man shows no emotion—says and does nothing—she is afraid always. But Borogrove did not know this, or did not care. He became angry and lost his dignity, so that she knew she held him in the hollow of her beautiful hand.

"For ten, fifteen, twenty minutes," he continued, "he stormed and raged up and down the room. She stood quietly, saying no word and waiting. I do not think that even she had known the villainess of his nature until that hour. But she was playing for time. She endured it.

"I will not dwell too long upon that scene. It was an unpleasant one. But at last he raved himself into silence, snatched up his hat, and strode toward the door, his face still burning with passion. His hand was upon the knob before she spoke.

"Don't you think, Borogrove," she said in that same soft, edged voice, "that if Stephen falls he will have need of all his—*friends*—beside him?"

"He turned on her uncertainly, his face working. He did not yet understand her purpose.

"*'Friends!'* he snarled. 'He will have no friends. When has a fallen man friends?'

"He will have one friend," she said softly.

"For a moment there was a dead silence. Borogrove's face had gone a ghastly gray. He was beginning to understand, beginning to see, dimly, his elaborately constructed attack upon the minister, not failing of its object, but

failing of its purpose—bringing down upon him the very scandal which he had lost his holy honor in attempting to ward off, involving himself in the ruin which he sought to bring upon his country. He licked his dry lips. He was afraid at last, very much afraid, because he did not quite understand.

"He will have me!" she told him quietly.

"She moved slowly across the room to where he stood, vacillating, by the door. Her face was deathly white, but her eyes were great, blazing pools of light. She stood straight before him, her slender figure drawn to its full height, her hands clasped behind her, and looked straight up into his face, daring his anger. Then she struck again, hard.

"*'Borogrove,'* she said, 'I swear by all the gods that if Stephen falls through you I will leave you. I will go to him—yes, I will go to him, if he will have me!'"

The ambassador scanned the faces of his audience from under heavy lids. There was a tense silence. Presently he continued:

"*Borogrove* went mad with rage. Alternately he stormed, sulked, and threatened, while she flayed him delicately with her tongue, just now and again a scathing word when his anger left him speechless, sufficient to urge him on to fresh paroxysms of rage or despair. So for hours she held him.

"He was between two fires. He dared not advance, for fear that she make good her threat and plunge his ancient and honorable name into the filthy quagmire which he himself had prepared for it. He dared not retreat now, at the eleventh hour, with the money of his foreign master in his pocket, for he knew that his master would desert him if he failed, and he would be handed over to his own people, branded as a traitor. He vacillated horribly between the two evils, his anger

blinding him to the relative ignominy of each, as she had known it would.

"But anger such as his must eventually either burn itself out or kill, and at last it burned itself out, in spite of the quiet vitriol of her tongue that whipped him on. Then he saw more clearly the alternatives that lay before him: either to see his wife go to the man he hated—for it did not occur to him to doubt that she would make good her threat—or to see himself disowned by his foreign master and betrayed to his own people, as a punishment for his failure, to meet with a traitor's death. It did not take him long then to choose. Cursing the ungovernable rage that had blinded him, he rushed from the house. He did not intend to die a traitor."

Again the Chinese ambassador paused and scanned the faces of the company, with a little smile, half-amused, half-contemptuous, on his face. His hostess had not moved throughout the story. The ambassador's eyes were upon her as he continued:

"She was clever," he said. "She timed it well. Had she given him more time to think, had she not roused his ungovernable temper before she struck, Stephen would have fallen. He would never, in the end, have dared to disobey his foreign masters. But she waited until his hand was raised, and then struck in under the armpit. For a priceless moment he hesitated, as she knew he would. A moment—a little matter of a few hours. In that moment of hesitation a nation was saved, and he was lost. For when he reached the council hall the crisis was past, the nation had flung itself into the scales of Europe on the side of civilization and progress. He stormed into the council hall, he raved like a madman, he waved his futile papers in the faces of the ministers, but it was too late. The irrevocable step had been taken. He was hissed and booed from his seat. He *died* later."

The Chinese ambassador concluded. He looked, smiling, from one to the other of the serious faces of his audience. Finally his eyes rested on his hostess questioningly. She looked up. Her dark eyes glowed; but behind them there was a feverish light.

"And Stephen, the minister," she said in a low voice, "what became of him?"

"Having placed the government on a stable basis," replied the ambassador, watching her impassively, "having seen his country through the great crisis and the years of struggle that followed, he retired. I have just come from visiting him at his home in the country, where he told me part—a little part—of his story."

There was a note of eagerness in her voice when she spoke again. She was oblivious of the assembled company, of all save the ambassador's yellow and wrinkled face.

"Does he know——" she began.

"He does not know what—what *she* has done for him and for his country," he interrupted. "He does not know that the memory of her husband is a hateful thing to her. He does not know that she remembers, I think, a certain day in June, many years ago, even as he remembers it."

"Do you think," she said very softly, "that *she would* have gone to him if he had fallen?"

The ambassador paused uncertainly before replying. Then:

"That, madam," he said, "with your permission, is a question that *you*, as a woman, can more easily and safely answer than I. But this I do know: she is free to go to him *now*!"

The countess looked up at him suddenly. Her eyes were like twin stars, and the color ebbed and flowed riotously in her cheeks.

"Where is he?" she said simply.



ILLUSION

THE goldfish staring at the fern
Through the clear bowl will never learn
It does not really grow so high,
He stares, and dreams, and wanders by.

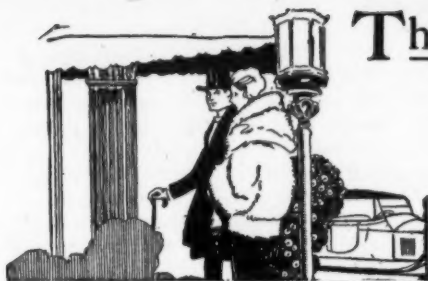
GRACE HAZARD CONKLING.



A MOMENT

I HEARD your crystal laughter on the stairs,
So ran to watch and listen to the jest;
And as your joy was bubbling unawares,
I felt this moment was most strangely blest.
I knew that on some day remote and chill,
Beyond the vale of many clouded years,
That moment would rekindle, and I still
Would see your laughter, through a mist of tears.

MARGARET MUNSTERBERG.



The Unfinished Artist

By
Josephine Bentham

MEMOIRS of a movie—here they are. Stick a towel over the transom and let the family think you're reading something else, these being written in Hollywood, where the wild, weird whoop of the frogs deadens the senses and clogs the brain every night from nine on.

They wanted the story simply—"without artifice"—and so be it, palpitating all over the twenty-cent pad, bought at a Hollywood drug store, where they charge you a dime for the ruled blotter inside the cover. Do you use those in Oklahoma? Neither do we. Ah, yes, we're all sisters under the grease paint!

Well, we'll say that my name is June Barlow. I'm one of these effete souls that get clasped to strong, manly, right-out-of-the-West bosoms, just reeking of fifteen for twenty. I've been Drummond Fontaine's leading woman for the last two years—the result being a tender feeling on my part toward his wife. Not that Drummond hasn't a few ideas, contrary to the general impression. For instance, he honestly doesn't want to steal the limelight, but, "after all, you've got to give the public what it wants." Which has always left me with my neck coyly twisted behind his ear, an elegant background for the Fontaine profile. His idea is that a certain star won't last another picture and that *he* wouldn't want the caramel crowd that sticks to *him*, anyhow! Fervent, but a

little frayed—they say it at the Ambassador forty times a night.

Well, if you've ever been to the movies you can visualize the gem that crabbed every stray bit of meat the scenario happened to throw in my direction. There have been times when we've parted forever in the third reel, and all I've been permitted to do was look like the village idiot casting off a banana peel. While Drummond looks toward the incandescents, rapidly clinching the optics in order to blink back a sob. Well, two months ago I got through a scene with this finished artist, retired into a funny dressing room pitched near Eagle Rock, put my face on a jar of cold cream, and bawled like a wronged daughter come back home.

You get that way some places, when you can't lengthen your blue-tricotine dress and your hair is half bobbed, half long, and you look like 1921 generally. You get that way a few miles northwest of Los Angeles, when you make a scraggly one hundred and fifty dollars a week and *want* to dress sort of like Claire Windsor. Oh, you know! The one thing that consoles me in this merry little world Mr. Guest writes about is the fact that everybody else has a sour mood ever and anon. That never fails to give me a cheer.

However, at this particular time I'm talking about, this child *wanted* to be a curl's length from Mary Pickford. I

wanted to see "JUNE BARLOW" in such a riot of electricity that the whole city couldn't use its curling irons while the ad was on. I wanted to sail down the street and watch people nudge, whisper, and get hysterical. I wanted this, that, and the other thing—and I was as far away from it as Mr. Fontaine is from a gleam of human reason.

To make a short story long, I finally broke my contract in a dainty bit of feminine temper, which same always being able to smoke up a place better than all the he-man irritation ever let off. I had a marcel and a manicure, and then I put every wandering penny I could lay an eye on into a trick, gray dress trimmed with moleskin. I felt a lot better already.

Then I gathered up a little chum and went out for tea and a cigarette. Whereupon, I looked out at the world from under the uncurled ostrich of a new hat, and the whole darn place looked simply gorgeous! Just do something addle-pated, and the blues tear on to a sensible fool.

Some old crony ambled across the room just then and said:

"Miss Barlow, I want you to meet Jasper Crowdis from Kansas. He's breaking into pictures and he admits he's lost in this hick town. Imagine it!"

"Oh, really?" I said, which is what we all say here when putting on the dog, and then I glanced up at this supposedly freckled haystacker.

If you don't believe in love at first sight, just turn right back to the article on vitamins. Because if you don't, you simply can't appreciate what it means to have your heart toddling up and down your vertebrae like a Rocky Mountain goat, and your voice acting like somebody else's radio outfit, and your teeth crowding out of your mouth in a grin absolutely beyond your control. Oh, well!

He sat down beside me and we diddle-daddled over the menus and looked

at each other and guffawed mildly over every little what-not that came up. My little friend faded away eventually, and so did the man who introduced me to Jasper. That left Jasper and me ready to blurt out every known fact about our respective lives. I trusted him with the fact that I had been to college, and he confided in me that he was supposed to be a farmer, but that he was sick to death of watching his highly coddled potatoes walk off into the world with their thumbs twiddling from their noses, all for the price of a couple of rubles a keg. Something like that.

Then the poor old dear told me he expected to write for the movies, at which I put my hand on his shoulder and did the best I could. But not that it was any use. There's something about the picture business—well, there's just something about the picture business, and that's all there is to that.

However, here was I—an actress—listening to somebody else for fifteen solid minutes. Recollecting myself, I pushed my foot on the old throttle and told Jasper Crowdis just how good I was, and exactly what my aspirations had been, were, and would be. We had a very beautiful time and we both hated to go home, so we didn't. He fox-trots just like butter sliding over a waffle, which is one of many surprising little tricks of his. Taking it all in all, I was nothing less than delirious by two a. m.

If you like blonds, you can imagine nice yellow hair and nice white teeth and nice blue eyes, smudged a little under the lid and sort of abstracted-looking. If you don't like blonds, I'm darn sorry for you and you'll just have to go along kidding yourself you're enjoying life. Jasper was a blond—is yet, but these are memoirs—and what with being so thin-skinned looking and young and helpless, I began to worry about him right away.

Of course, there isn't anything in Hollywood which would make you think

you were patronizing an Alaskan dance hall, under the personal supervision of Mr. Rex Beach, but at the same time there are a lot of giddy ninnycompoops from Iowa taking in the piers at the beaches and Sunset Inn and Angel's Flight and every other place within fifty miles of this frenzied suburb, and in an emergency such as this I have never been one to act like Lillian Gish.

I immediately told Jasper where he was to board; what he was to pay, eat, wear, and drink; where he was to go, where he was not to go, why not and why. He lapped it all up like a lamb:

Each of us got a bit of work in a day or two—more luck than we deserved, certainly. We didn't strain ourselves over our toil, either. I spent half my time in front of a mirror, purring. Shot quarters to the street beggars and patted the heads of all dogs, cats, and little girls. Simply maudlin.

And then, probably just because I was treating my art like a mangled bit of salmon, along came a producer who saw huge possibilities in the way I registered this, that, and the other thing. Which same possibilities had been exposed to the cinematic optic all these years, but apparently luck doesn't come in dribbles. Anyhow, I got the feminine lead in a new producing company, also rating a not-too-minor part for Jasper, and just let me pause to remark that the world was our property.

I took my nice innocent by the hand one Monday morning and we trotted amiably to work. We were supposed to start shooting, but well I knew that we would merely dawdle around the lot for some days hence. Jasper, however, confidently toted his little knapsack—me feeling that if only I could have blown his nose and tucked an apple into his pocket the picture would have been complete.

That being where I didn't make any mistake. Jasper was all agog. Right

away he fell in love with all the pretty teachers.

I think I told you that I'd been to college. Anyhow, I have a vocabulary of a sort, even if it is all smeared over with cinemese, but it hasn't words to describe the freezing, sizzling, maddening rage I felt all that whole day. Every eyelash expert for yards around marked my Jasper for her own—and they aren't the kind to don a veil at sight of a man and go careening into the sanctity of their mothers' arms. Oh, no! Then Jasper, besides being different, was so shy that it appealed to the maternal instinct, and when a man can do that without actually stuttering, he might just as well buy himself a date book. By three o'clock they were calling him Ja-Ja.

Well, the idiotic picture took four months in filming alone. I tried my little darnedest to galvanize a bit of action into everybody, from the hairdresser—a Louisiana negress with hands like mattresses—to Stephen Naylor, our director, also Southern; and the worst diddle-daddler ever born. You see I was resigned to the fact that I couldn't desert the ship and drag Jasper with me, but I just about stood on the waves and pushed, which was the next best thing. But right now I take my blond wig between my fists and announce to the high blue that it didn't do any good whatsoever. Jasper went down under a third-rate tidal wave.

Cara Carsdale was the sort of moving-picture actress you never hear about unless you buy all the trade magazines and read 'em right down to the projection ads. Yet her kind is more professional than a make-up box. Fifteen-dollar chiffon stockings and a cold breakfast. Cara was little and dark and continually charged with a nervous giggle. Without losing a second, she had parked her huge black eyes on my Jasper, and looked wistful—you can

talk about tall brunettes and tiny blondes, but just let me put my finger nails on one of these little, dark-haired women with unhappy-acting eyelashes and tremulous, Spanish chins—oh, well!

"Ja-Ja!" she said one morning, in full earshot of the assembled throng and with her usual naïve line that is so effective with men—the poor boobs! "Ja-Ja! I've got a new, funny little car, and I wish you'd drive out to location with me, will you?"

There was a groan, which Jasper didn't even hear; he climbed in beside Cara and began monkeying around with the ignition or something, it having been decided that he should drive. Cara never had an equal for making a man feel that proprietary sensation. She pulled her turban way down over her eyes and put her little hands around her crossed knees and smiled good-by at everybody. I drove out to the ranch with Steve Naylor himself, in a marvelous hack which ordinarily would have afforded me a mild feeling of upstage, but not now.

Looking back, I can admit freely that Randolph Ranch was a wonderful place. It was typically Californian: the house was built around a patio, and in the patio were Mr. and Mrs. Randolph, who welcomed us just as nicely as if we hadn't been picture people, but merely thugs and refined bootleggers.

We shot some *ad lib* stuff and then had lunch, having reached the decision to come back to-morrow to finish.

Well, we ran all around the miserable place, with Cara hanging on to my Jasper's arm and cooing about the funny cows with horns on them—and were young horses heifers?—and look at all the eggs, Ja-Ja!

Jasper being sort of bewildered, but terribly flattered. It's bad enough to be jealous, but it's past description to be jealous *and* to have to pretend that all you ask of life is a field of buttercups, in order that you may gambol

around with the merry little birds and bees. Merciful Allah!

Then suddenly Jasper and Cara disappeared. They went away hand in hand to look at the goats or something, while I exchanged airy persiflage with Mr. Randolph, fully expecting my eyes to fall out of their sockets.

They didn't. But the old-fashioned misery got me by the throat and still hung on half an hour later. I think I got a couple of gray hairs—I'm not sure about that, but, anyhow, it wasn't too delightful to see Jasper coming back from his tour, with his face shining like a kid's and the Crowdis grin all over the place. Cara wasn't with him, but I fully believed that she was polishing up the solitaire out in the henhouse.

"Listen!" bellowed Jasper. "I'm off this picture game! I thought I was tired of farming, but this California idea's got me. That stock—say, Mr. Randolph, about how much do they sting you for a little ranch here?"

"Lot more money in pictures," Steve said irritably.

"I know. But give a man a home and a wonderful little wife——"

"Little!" I'm not little, and Cara is.

They all laughed at Jasper until Cara's arrival brought them up short.

She was crying, evidently from pure, sheer rage, and the make-up was dropping in gobs from her eyelashes. Moreover, her black curls were mostly missing. Only a shingle remained.

"I shouldn't have left you," Jasper mumbled.

"Your—your hair, Miss Carsdale?" some one gasped.

"The damn goat chewed it off!" Cara snapped back; and she was no picture of melting feminine forgiveness, either.

I felt sorry for her. I still do. Cara's only a movie star now, and June Barlow Crowdis is the wife of the man who invented the Sure-thing Incubator.

I know—the laugh's on me, but just let me add that I'm wearing it!



In Broadway Playhouses

By
Dorothy Parker

Three Rousing Cheers

IT comes over me at least once a day, and never without an accompanying sensation of black guilt, that I shall never in this life qualify as a professional reviewer of "Hamlet." The thing to do, the brave, sensible thing, is to make the best of it, to try to tell myself that I, too, have my little place in the mighty design of things, and to bend my talents to something to which they are fitted, such as filling inkwells or checking up laundry lists.

For a good, all-around, certified reviewer of "Hamlet" I can never become, and that is the end of it. I fail to make the grade on the following two vital points: (a) I never saw Booth in the rôle; (b) my heart is not broken because I never saw Booth in the rôle. Either one is enough to finish me.

And while I am going in for shy and faltering admissions, I might as well come clean with the rest of my ugly secret, here and now. I cannot go on this way, afraid to meet your eye, fearful that any moment you may find me out and cast me aside like a withered nosegay. So, if you feel that you are strong enough to stand it, I may as well shoot, and get it over with.

It's like this: If they were to come to me to-night as I sit at dinner, and tell me that an amendment had just been added to the Constitution prohibiting

the performance of the plays of William Shakespeare on any stage, I should politely remark, "Oh, is that so?" and calmly go on eating. For the horrid truth is that Shakespeare on the stage is not for me. I don't mean to be bigoted about the thing. Some of my best friends heartily and sincerely enjoy Shakespearean performances. But, for me, the plays of Shakespeare in the theater are as so many helpings of creamed carrots—I know they will do me good and I ought to enjoy them, but I am congenitally unable to.

To read Shakespeare, quietly and comfortably at home—now you're talking! The printed words grip me as the elocuted ones never do. In fact, I have to read them in the strictest privacy—fortunately, we have one of those nice little red editions that sit so prettily on the faucets of the bathtub—for so carried away do I become that I feel I must declaim the speeches with appropriate gestures. And then, for while I'm being honest I might as well carry the thing through, I may point out that a far-from-negligible factor in the advantage that reading the plays of Shakespeare has over seeing them acted lies in the fact that you can always close a book and lay it aside, when you chance to feel that way.

I like to tell myself that, because I

enjoy reading Shakespeare, I have, in a small way, my appreciation of the beautiful, just like regular people. And naturally I don't speak right out in company and say how I feel when I go to the theater to see "Hamlet" or "Macbeth" or even "The Merry Wives of Windsor"—and I may say in passing that if that last is an hilariously amusing comedy, then I am Pola Negri—and it suddenly sweeps over me that there I am, trapped in the middle of a row, and that scene after scene of that kind of stuff is going to go on before me until deep into the night. This is just between you and me. And even in this comforting privacy I am stricken and abashed to confess that I cannot thrill to the acted plays of Shakespeare. But there the thing stands. As the admirable Mr. Montague Glass makes one of his characters say, "If I don't feel it, I don't feel it."

I tell you all this about me not merely to give you a glimpse of the way the other half lives. It is all by way of paying additional tribute to the combined arts of Mr. John Barrymore, Mr. Robert Edmund Jones, and Mr. Arthur Hopkins. It is taking the longest way around, perhaps, yet it is meant in the best and most grateful of spirits. When I was wont to witness "Hamlet," a feeling of blah o'ercame me that was not akin to pain and resembled sorrow only as the mist resembled the rain. And these three gentlemen have made the play, even to the unappreciative likes of me, a live and vital tragedy, beautiful to the eye, thrilling to the ear, and spurring to the imagination. Now, at last, I can see what people mean when they talk about Shakespeare.

I don't know, as I stammered to you a little while ago, how the Barrymore *Hamlet* compares with Booth's. But I am willing to go down to my plot in Woodlawn secure in the conviction that never has there been so fine a *Hamlet* as John Barrymore's. He makes the

Prince of Elsinore a young and engaging man, gives him flashes of quiet, skillful humor, grips you suddenly with a glimpse of his desperate loneliness. He speaks the words as if they were coming fresh from his mind; there is never that feeling of being present at a reading from Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations" that hangs so heavily over most performances of "Hamlet." As to his sanity, you are never in a moment's doubt. You leave the theater ready to take the thing to court, if necessary. "If *Hamlet* was insane," you mutter threateningly, "so is the Prince of Wales."

Mr. Jones has set the play against broad, gray steps and great, cold castle walls, seeming to rise to vast heights. He has also done away with the usual healthy, well-fed ghost of *Hamlet's* father, and substituted a strange, unearthly light that fades and throbs. It is like all the pictures of ectoplasm: a ghost strictly according to Doyle, if I may say so. Against the gray background, the brilliant costumes of the king, the queen, and the courtiers form unforgettable groups, and the last scene of all, where the dead *Hamlet* is borne up the stairs to the sound of trumpets, is as beautiful as anything the stage may ever hope to offer.

Blanche Yerka is a convincing *queen*, though a somewhat disconcertingly youthful one, and John O'Brien is a delightful *Polonius*. The chirpy little *Ophelia* Rosalind Fuller presents seems pretty fairly exasperating. In her earlier scenes she seems too intent on advancing her left knee, so that the skirt of her gown may fall picturesquely, to give you any illusion, and in her mad scene she is less the pathetic *Ophelia* than a Scott Fitzgerald flapper under the influence of several bootleg cocktails. But *Ophelia* really matters very little; the thing that matters is *Hamlet* himself. And it seems as if *Hamlet* himself must evermore be indistinguish-

able from John Barrymore's playing of him.

You take, I suppose, a long drop when you come from Shakespeare to Harry Leon Wilson, though I'm sure I don't know why. But it isn't such a long leap from one perfect performance to another, and Glenn Hunter's performance of *Merton Gill*, the hauntingly wistful hero of "Merton of the Movies," seems to be as near perfect as anything ever gets. The Messrs. Marc Connelly and George S. Kaufman have reverently moved Harry Leon Wilson's story from the bookshelf to the stage without spilling so much as a drop of its essence.

Mr. Hunter brings to the leading character much more of pathos than the book offered. There were those of the reviewers who hailed the play as a roaring comedy; but if the story of the movie-struck grocer's clerk who acted in the films with all his heart and soul, only to find that producers and public hailed him with roars of laughter as the greatest comedian of the time, if the scene where *Merton* kneels by his pitiful cot and prays, "Dear God, make me a good movie actor, for Jesus' sake, amen"—if these are funny, then the daydreams of Joan of Arc were perfect screams.

Florence Nash plays the coveted rôle of the *Montague girl*, and, in this quarter at least, there were nasty qualms when the news leaked out that the choice had fallen upon her. Apologies in neat packages, tied up with bows of pink ribbon, are hereby tendered Miss Nash. True, she is as nasal and as much dependent upon her gesture of shoving her hands cutely into her pockets as she was wont to be, but she brings to "Merton of the Movies" a great tenderness that is a complete surprise to all who have followed her. It is going to be a great day for her career when she plays a part where all her costumes must be made without pockets.

Another flawless performance—it is a month when you can just sit back and bask in the warm light of individual achievements—is that of Jeanne Eagels in "Rain," the merciless tragedy that John Colton and Clemence Randolph have made of Somerset Maugham's masterly story, "Miss Thompson," once published unobtrusively in a magazine. Miss Eagels has been sidling demurely about in such things as "Daddies" and "The Professor's Love Story," and her startling performance of the rôle of the prostitute who reforms at the strenuous urgings of the missionary, only to go back to her old ways when she finds him a man of flesh, after all, is the season's greatest surprise. Her voice, her intonations, her bursts of hard laughter and flaming fury—great is the least that you can call them. And when you think of her in that tangle of stage children in "Daddies"—well, things are assuredly not what they were when grammar was a girl.

But Miss Eagels is not the only fine thing about "Rain." It seems perfect throughout. The South Sea Island atmosphere is reproduced with appalling vividness. I don't just sit back and say it from guesswork and a reading of Frederick O'Brien's books; I know a man who has a cousin who once stopped off at Pago-Pago, the scene of the play, and he says that the thing has been caught perfectly. And then almost every other performance in the play is equally great, in its way, notably Rapley Holmes as the trader, Emma Willcox as his native wife, and, in particular, Catherine Brookes as the wife of the missionary. "Rain" is, in short, a truly fine play, though, if you go to the theater to get all cheered up, it is only fair to mention that it is a cruel and a bitter one. But you should see it, if you never see anything else. If you have time for just one play, you should even miss "Hamlet" to see "Rain." Any one can tell you about "Hamlet."

There is another fine performance, though possibly not so difficult a one, in "The Texas Nightingale," the new Zoe Akins play. It is that of Jobyna Howland, who plays the title rôle, the girl from Texas who rises to become the temperamental, famous, lavishly married prima donna of the Metropolitan Opera House. Plays of the temperamental prima donna proceed pretty well along the good old formula: the bursts of temper ending in the melting tenderness, showing that the lady has a great, big heart, after all; the little scenes of sentiment cut abruptly by a funny line, indicative of a typical change of mood; the ridiculous vanity, deftly punctured from time to time, but always springing up again; and so on, practically *ad infinitum*. Miss Akins' play is like all the others about lady opera singers, and, also like all of them, it is highly amusing. In fact, it seems distinctly more amusing than most, for which the credit must be divided, perhaps a bit unequally, between Miss Howland and the author.

"Six Characters in Search of an Author," from the Italian of Luigi Pirandello, had its early audiences guessing a trifle. One lady, who loudly proclaimed that, take her, she went to the theater only to be amused, felt rather bitterly about it, rather as if the producer and the actors had taken a base advantage of her by luring her in and then springing metaphysics at her when she least expected it. Yet, with the exception of this lady and some of her little pals, "Six Characters in Search of an Author" seems to be getting along on the pleasantest of terms with the public. It is rather hard to ferret out the reason why. There is not a laugh or a snappy line that you can take home to the folks in all this curious play about the characters who wander into a theater while a rehearsal is taking place, and plead to be given life. Perhaps its encouraging popular-

ity is due to the fact that, mixed with the spectator's whole-hearted interest in it, is a nice, warm little feeling that he is one of the lofty few who can appreciate such things—and a feeling like that, once in a while, never did any one any harm.

"The World We Live In," which is the somewhat cumbersome title under which is presented "The Insect Comedy," from the joint pen of the Capek brothers, the prides of Czecho-Slovakia, is a cruel blow to those of us who were looking forward to its production as to a visit from jolly old Kriss Kringle. The idea of a play all of whose characters, save one, were insects, seemed too delightful to bear waiting for. But when the play eventually arrived it turned out to be pretty fairly dull. Only in the fine scene showing the ants at their work and their wars did it come up to one's glowing hopes of it; the rest of the evening it was too sharply reminiscent of those butterfly and grasshopper ballets that are always breaking out at the Hippodrome and the Winter Garden for any one to take it much to heart.

The management doubtless called it "The World We Live In" by way of breaking it gently to the audience that the authors had in mind some notion of making their play a satire on human life. But the audience blissfully ignored the hint that the thing had anything whatever to do with them. Yet they were not the ones to fail to get a bit of symbolism—not they! The ant warriors wore helmets, so the audience, in scarcely more time than it takes to tell it, worked it all out that they were meant to represent the Germans, and acted accordingly. It did one's heart good to see them. Nothing is too subtle for these New York theatergoers to grasp.

"The Last Warning" came into town unobtrusively, and remains to the accompaniment of prolonged cheering. It

is as terrifying a piece as you would want to see, warranted to bring on nice, long attacks of chills and fever to all those who witness it. It is not so horrible as "The Cat and the Canary," but it is, in its own quiet way, just horrible enough. And it has the distinction, among all the mystery plays, of offering the weakest explanation for the horrors that have occurred, which is no faint praise. But there, if you're going to go finding fault with the clearing up of the series of mysteries after all the thrills the play has given you out of the kindness of the author's heart, then there is no gratitude in this world, that's all.

Of the musical offerings, naturally the big excitement of the season eddied about the opening of the second annual "Music Box Revue." Those who had cracked a safe and got the money for a couple of seats to last season's show took up their well-worn blackjacks and went out to earn the king's ransom for a visit to the new entertainment. But that's the way it always is when you get looking forward to something—the new "Music Box Revue" turned out to be little, if anything, to have counted the hours for.

Last year's revue, besides the charm of its music, had large gobs of comedy crammed generously into it. But this season things aren't so funny. There is an impressive array of comedians, including Bobby Clark, imported from burlesque, but the humor doesn't seem to be what it was in the old days. And neither, though it tears my heart to say it, does Mr. Berlin's music. The piece is always dazzling to look at, yet as you watch new trick effects appear before you, you do not exclaim "How beautiful!" half so much as "Great Allah, that must have cost a million dollars!" The major impression you take away from "The Music Box Revue" is of the truly staggering expense it must have been to produce it.

I don't say this isn't a perfectly splendid asset for an entertainment, but it tends to bring on a feeling of awe rather than one of amusement.

It is doubtful if "Liza," the new colored musical show which succeeds "Shuffle Along" at the Sixty-third Street Theater, cost one one-hundredth so much as "The Music Box Revue" did. But "The Music Box Revue" can never have a thousandth part of the enthusiasm and the spontaneity that distinguish "Liza." The show even outdistances the colored productions that have gone before in the singing and dancing of its chorus. It doesn't seem as if there could ever have been such lavish and joyous and wholehearted dancing as there is in "Liza." Compared to its chorus, the choruses of the other current musical shows have about as much verve as so many damp soda crackers.

Even the dancers of "Little Nellie Kelly," the new George M. Cohan musical comedy, seem as animated as figures in slow motion pictures beside those of "Liza." Yet, always provided you haven't seen the negro show, "Little Nellie Kelly" seems to show a pleasing disregard for all speed laws in the dancing of its cast. The whole comedy goes at the terrific Cohan pace, so that you don't have a moment to yourself to brood over the horrors of the plot, but are left breathless at the end of each act, your mind a happy jumble of dancers, comedians, costumes, the charming Elizabeth Hines, and the ingratiating Charles King. Besides, there are various tunes that are practically impossible to get out of your head, even days after; among them "Till My Luck Comes Rolling Along" and the big *Oedipus-complex* song hit, "You Remind Me of My Mother, That's Why I Love You."

If you wanted to sum up "Little Nellie Kelly" in three words, "a good show" would do it nicely.

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

MUCH—perhaps, indeed, too much—has been said about the wild caperings of the young, particularly the young let loose in and, more specifically, on society. And yet, try as it will to get away from the dizzily gyrating young, public opinion nevertheless continues to yield first place in the social discussion to them. And there's a refreshing reaction to anything in the way of a new angle on the subject.

THAT new angle we greeted very cordially when we found it in Winston Bouvé's latest novelette. For the March issue this capable young writer has fashioned a gripping story about an ingenuous small-town girl, who finds herself suddenly transformed into a young society matron, with none of the background of smart trappings and the more caustic kind of mental agility that seem to constitute the stock in trade of the younger married set in a large city. Francine Arnold came to the city to make her own way. And on her first party she captured the scion of an old house, wealthy, young, and gay, with both feet planted, moreover, solidly on the social ladder. And, by a curious trick of fate, she found herself accepting him that same night, and marrying him a few hours later. And so she joined, quite unwittingly and quite involuntarily, it may be added, the ranks of the "squanderers." For a thoroughly engaging longer fiction tale we can recommend nothing more than the March novelette, "The Squanderers," by Winston Bouvé.

IF there is anything more pathetic than a clown, performing his antics for the public, and sighing meanwhile with breaking heart for the world's acclaim of him in more serious endeavor, we don't know it. Jim Harper was a professional cartoonist, a "funny

man." He *had* to see humor in everything he looked at. Even the moon on soft summer nights was funny to his distorted vision, until by and by the tears threatened to stream from the face of the clown. One of the most touching stories we have ever read, one that literally gripped our heart, is Mildred Cram's latest story, "The Funny Man." It goes a long way to prove, incidentally, that even the hilarious flapper type of young womanhood has its depths, and an understanding that the mature woman of more complex emotions is sometimes curiously unable to achieve.

IN the March AINSLEE's also the next story in Austin Wade's bridge series will appear. It is called "A Matter of Principle," and suggests very deftly a prevalent feminine bridge-playing type. Almost every bridge table has known a lovely player of the sort who has her unchangeable principles about the game. Here she is, cleverly incorporated into a bright and engagingly told story.

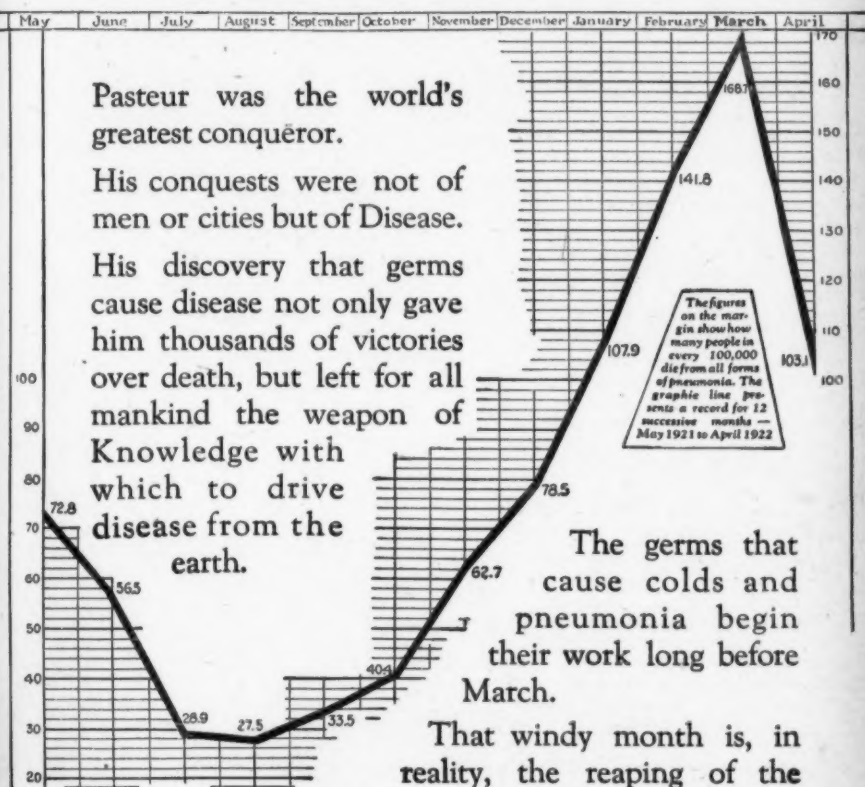
IT happens very often that a man or woman, rarely successful in one line of endeavor, fails pitifully in some other lines; is, in the vernacular of the day, a "dud." Helen was a popular London actress. But decidedly she was not a skilled horsewoman. And, when on a house party she suddenly found a hunt in order, she was rather definitely up against it. Gilbert Frankau has written a really thrilling story for the March AINSLEE's. We recommend "The Hunting of Helen" as the kind of brisk sports tale which one doesn't often meet with. It is fairly alive with action every minute.

You will find in the March number also stories by Beatrice Ravenel, Izola Forrester, May Edginton, Frances O. J. Gaither, and others.

March-The Danger Month

Below is a photograph of a Year. It pictures graphically for you, month by month, the death rate from Pneumonia, from May 1921 to April 1922.

Study the picture. Travel over the Year. At each station or month, note carefully the Pneumonia figures. When you reach the dizzy pinnacle—the March Peak—you will note that the danger of death from all forms of pneumonia is more than six times as great as in midsummer.



Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

whirlwind—of the wind sown from November on.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes said:

"Most diseases can be cured if taken in time, but some of them should be taken three hundred years before the patient is born."

Thus Dr. Holmes anticipated the great Pasteur and sounded the keynote of modern medicine—Prevention.

Looking backward down March Hill, note that the up-grade for pneumonia began when the

windows went down and the steam was turned on.

And that is the time to begin the work of Prevention—the building up of the body from within to fortify it against the germs that cause colds, influenza and pneumonia.

And remember, even though March comes in like a lamb—she is a wolf in sheep's clothing—ready to devour the body not strengthened throughout the year to resist her blustery winds, icy breath and the flattery of her occasional sunny smile.

The heavy zigzag line which stretches across the preceding page is a facsimile of a portion of one of the health graphs regularly kept by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. It is printed to bring home to millions the fact that the danger from pneumonia is more than six times greater in March than in midsummer.

The things to be guarded against are over-fatigue, exposure, contagion and neglect. A first hint of danger is often indigestion or cold. Avoid clogging the body with heavy, indigestible foods. Most important, avoid constipation. Wear light, warm clothing. Wear stout, warm shoes. Sleep with windows open.

If you get your feet wet, change to warm, dry things as soon as possible and restore the circulation. Keep the hands out of the mouth and

keep the mouth and teeth clean. Use a handkerchief as a screen for a cough or a sneeze.

As soon as nature warns you that something is wrong, consult your doctor; go to bed, get warm and keep covered up. Cut down your diet to the last possible notch. Drink plenty of water—hot preferably.

Mothers should specially guard children suffering from measles, whooping cough and the other contagious diseases—pneumonia frequently follows these diseases.

In the interests of community welfare, the Metropolitan gladly authorizes any individual, organization or periodical to reprint either the chart or information on these pages.

HALEY FISKE, *President*



Published by

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY—NEW YORK

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\$1.00 a pound for ROMANCE SELECTIONS—If your dealer can't supply you, send us his name and \$1.00 and we'll send you a box postpaid

For years the choice of a selected few~

A REMARKABLE new candy that is now ready for the whole American market. For years these remarkable chocolates have been the choice of the selected few who have known them.

Crunchy nuts and luscious fruit; the most delicious coatings; butter and cream from New

England's finest dairies; all prepared by exclusive recipes.

Try Romance Chocolates today. Then surprise your friends with these delightful new candies. Prices from 80c to \$1.50 a pound. Cox Confectionery Co., East Boston, Mass.

ROMANCE CHOCOLATES

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She Found A Pleasant Way To Reduce Her Fat

She did not have to go to the trouble of diet or exercise. She found a better way, which aids the digestive organs to turn food into muscle, bone and sinew instead of fat.

She used **Marmola Prescription Tablets**, which are made from the famous Marmola prescription. They aid the digestive system to obtain the full nutriment of food. They will allow you to eat many kinds of food without the necessity of dieting or exercising.

Thousands have found that the **Marmola Prescription Tablets** give complete relief from obesity. And when the accumulation of fat is checked, reduction to normal, healthy weight soon follows.

All good drug stores the world over sell **Marmola Prescription Tablets** at one dollar a box. Ask your druggist for them, or order direct and they will be sent in plain wrapper, postpaid.

MARMOLA COMPANY
283 Garfield Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

THE VALUE OF CHARCOAL

Few People Know How Useful it is in Preserving Health and Beauty.

Nearly everybody knows that charcoal is the safest and most efficient disinfectant and purifier in nature, but few realize its value when taken into the human system for the same cleansing purpose.

Charcoal is a remedy that the more you take of it the better; it is not a drug at all, but simply absorbs the gases and impurities always present in the stomach and intestines and carries them out of the system.

Charcoal sweetens the breath after smoking, and after eating onions and other odorous vegetables.

Charcoal effectually clears and improves the complexion, it whitens the teeth and further acts as a natural and eminently safe cathartic.

It absorbs the injurious gases which collect in the stomach and bowels; it disinfects the mouth and throat from the poison of catarrh.

All druggists sell charcoal in one form or another, but probably the best charcoal and the most for the money is in Stuart's Charcoal Lozenges; they are composed of the finest powdered Willow charcoal, in tablet form or rather in the form of large, pleasant tasting lozenges, the charcoal being sweetened to be smooth and palatable.

The daily use of these lozenges will soon tell in a much improved condition of the general health, better complexion, sweeter breath and purer blood, and the beauty of it is, that no possible harm can result from their continued use, but, on the contrary, great benefit.

Many physicians advise Stuart's Charcoal Lozenges to patients suffering from gas in stomach and bowels, and to clear the complexion and purify the breath, mouth and throat.

Charcoal is also believed to greatly benefit the liver. These lozenges cost but thirty cents a box at drug stores, and you get more and better charcoal in Stuart's Charcoal Lozenges than in any of the ordinary charcoal tablets.

Here's a Prescription for Coughs

For quick relief try **PISO'S**—A most effective syrup different from all others. Safe and sane for young and old. Pleasant—no opiates—no upset stomach. 35c and 60c sizes obtainable everywhere.

PISO'S—For Coughs & Colds



DIAMONDS

FOR A FEW CENTS A DAY

Don't send a single penny. Ten days **Free Trial**. When the ring comes examine it—if you are not convinced it is the **Greatest Bargain in America**, send it back at our expense. Only if pleased, send \$1.50 weekly—at the rate of a few cents a day. This **Bargain Cluster Ring** with 7 Blue-White Perfect Cut Diamonds can be yours. No red tape. No risk.

\$150 a Week
SEND NO MONEY
Looks like \$350 Solitaire No. 61 only \$59.50
We Trust You

FREE

J.M. LYON & CO.
2-4 Maiden Lane N.Y.


Send today. It pleases thousands of Bargains. Address Dept. 1922.

Million Dollar Bargain Book

FREE

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Stop Using a Truss



STUART'S PLAPAS—PAPS are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made self-adhesive purpose to hold the distended muscles securely in place. No straps, buckles or spring attached—no adhesive slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone. Thousands have successfully treated themselves at home without hindrance from work—most obstinate cases conquered.

Gold Medal
Grand Prix

Soft as velvet—easy to apply—insensitive. Awarded Gold Medal and Grand Prix. Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no further use for truss. We prove it by sending Trial of Plapas absolutely **FREE**.

Write name on Coupon and send **TODAY**.

Plapas Co. 633 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Name.....

Address.....

Return mail will bring Free Trial Plapas.....

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How Strong Are You

Can You Do These Things?

- Lift 200 or more overhead with one arm;**
- Bend and break a horse shoe;**
- Tear two decks of playing cards;**
- Bend spikes;**
- Chin yourself with one hand.**

Can you do any of them? I can and many of my pupils can. It is remarkable the things a man really can do if he will make up his mind to be strong. Any man. It is natural for the human body to be strong. It is unnatural to be weak. One leading writer on physical culture says: "It is criminal to be weak." I have taken men who were ridiculed because of their frail make-up and developed them into the strongest men of their locality.

I Want You For 90 Days

These are the days that call for speed. It once took four weeks to cross the ocean—now it takes less than one. In olden days it took years to develop a strong, healthy body. I can completely transform you in 90 days. Yes, make a complete change in your entire physical make-up. In 30 days I guarantee to increase your biceps one full inch. I also guarantee to increase your chest two full inches. But I don't quit there. I don't stop till you're a finished athlete—a real strong man. I will broaden your shoulders, deepen your chest, strengthen your neck. I will give you the arms and legs of a Hercules. I will put an armor plate of muscle over your entire body. But with it comes the strong, powerful lungs which enrich the blood, putting new life into your entire being. You will have the spring to your step and the flash to your eyes. You will be bubbling over with strength, pep and vitality.

A Doctor Who Takes His Own Medicine

Many say that any form of exercise is good, but this is not true. I have seen men working in the mills who literally killed themselves with exercise. They ruined their heart or other vital organs, ruptured themselves or killed off what little vitality they possessed. I was a frail weakling myself in search of health and strength. I spent years in study and research, analyzing my own defects to find what I needed. After many tests and experiments, I discovered the secret of progressive exercising. I have increased my own arm over 6½ inches, my neck 3 inches and other parts of my body in proportion. I decided to become a public benefactor and impart this knowledge to others. Physicians and the highest authorities on physical culture have tested my system and pronounced it to be the surest means of acquiring perfect manhood. Do you crave a strong, well-proportioned body and the abundance of health which go with it? Are you true to yourself? If so spend a pleasant half hour in learning how to attain it. The knowledge is yours for the asking.

Send for My New 64-Page Book

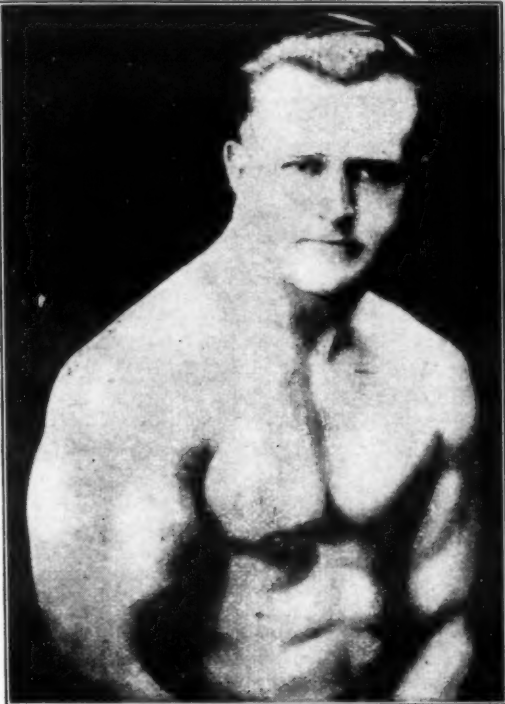
"MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT"

It Is FREE

It is chock full of photographs both of myself and my numerous pupils. Also contains a treatise on the human body and what can be done with it. This book is bound to **interest** you and **thrill** you. It will be an **impetus**—an **inspiration** to every **red-blooded** man. I could easily collect a big price for a book of this kind just as others are now doing, but I want every man and boy who is interested to just send the attached coupon and the book is his—**absolutely free**. All I ask is the price of wrapping and postage—to cents. Remember, this does not obligate you in any way. I want you to have it. **So it's yours** to keep. Now don't delay one minute. This may be the turning point in your life. Tear off the coupon and mail at once while it is on your mind.

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN

Dept. 5002, 305 Broadway, New York City



Earle E. Liederman as he is to-day

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN

Dept. 5002, 305 Broadway, N. Y. City

Dear Sir:—I enclose herewith 10 cents for which you are to send me, without obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book, "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

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City..... State.....

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2. Free Electrical Outfit—Finest outfit ever sent out for home experiment.
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8. Spare time work—Special earn-while-you-learn lessons.
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You don't have to be a College Man; you don't have to be a High School graduate. My Course in Electricity is the most simple, thorough and successful in existence, and offers every man regardless of age, education or previous experience, the chance to become, in a very short time, an "Electrical Expert," able to make from \$70 to \$200 a week.

I Give You a Real Training As Chief Engineer of the Chicago Engineering Works I know exactly the kind of training a man needs to get the best positions at the highest salaries. Hundreds of my students are now earning \$3,500 to \$10,000. Many are now successful ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS.

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I give each student a Splendid Outfit of Electrical Tools, Materials and Measuring Instruments absolutely FREE. I also supply them with Drawing Outfit, examination paper, and many other things that other schools don't furnish. You do PRACTICAL work AT HOME. You start right in after the first few lessons to work at your profession in a practical way—make extra money while you learn.

Get Started Now—Mail Coupon I want to send you an Electrical Book and Proof Lessons both FREE. These cost you nothing and you'll enjoy them. Make the start today for a bright future in Electricity. Send in coupon—NOW.

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	SHOTGUN					POWDERS				
	DUPONT (Bulk)					SMOKELESS				
	17 GAUGE	or 16 GAUGE	or 15 GAUGE	or 14 GAUGE	or 13 GAUGE	17 GAUGE	or 16 GAUGE	or 15 GAUGE	or 14 GAUGE	or 13 GAUGE
Turkey	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Geese	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Brant	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Large Ducks	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Medium Ducks	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Golden Plover	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Chickadee	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Squirrels	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Rabbits	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Small Ducks	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Pheasants	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Partridges	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Doves	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Quail	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Snipe	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Woodcock	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Shore Birds	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Reed Birds	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2
Trap shooting	3 3/4	1 1/4	7/8	1	7/8	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2

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 If BALLISTITE (Dense) Powder is desired order by grains.
 A comparison follows of Bulk and Dense Loads:

DRAMS	GRAINS	DRAMS	GRAINS
3 3/4 equivalent to	26	2 1/2 equivalent to	20
3 1/4	20	2 1/4	16
3	16	2	12
2 3/4	12	1 3/4	10

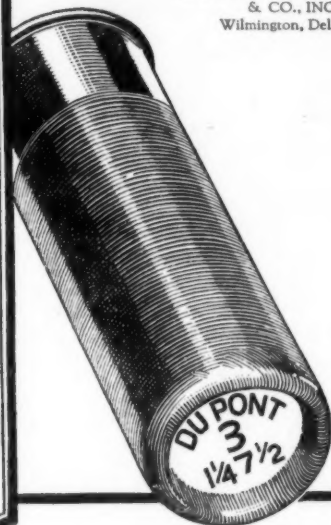
* In 17-Gauge loads only use No 2 Shot.



Dealers everywhere carry these standard loads of du Pont Powders, because they have found that a great majority of their customers demand them.

Du Pont makes powder — not shells. Du Pont Powders are loaded in every brand of shell. The name "DUPONT" or "BALLISTITE", printed on the carton and the top shot wad, tells you what powder you are shooting. Specify the powder when you buy the shell.

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\$43 In One Evening

That's what our representative in the town of Chelan, Wash. made through this amazing invention. And YOU can do that too in

Just Your SPARE TIME

This new heating device—the Oliver Improved Oil-Gas Burner, does away with money high priced coal and wood. Burns 5¢ oil, 1¢ oil. Gives 3 times the heat of coal and wood at turn of a valve. So attractive to housewives it practically sells itself. Agents make fortunes taking orders from neighbors and canvassing their towns. Oliver's amazing features make everything easy.

Write for Free Book Send postcard or letter for interesting free book telling all about the Oliver and how to get a special Exclusive Franchise for your territory. Big money in spare or full time. Write now! OLIVER OIL-GAS BURNER & MACHINE COMPANY, 2412-N Oliver Building, St. Louis, Mo.

Three Talented Artists Joined in Designing This Lamp



The hues, proportions and coloring of most of the lamps you see in these days of commercialism are the work of designing departments of large factories. They are the fruits of a deep knowledge of what makes a "popular seller" in the stores. But this exquisite little lamp—"Aurora" as it has been named by an artist because of the purity of its Greek lines—was designed by the united talents of an architect and interior decorator, a painter, and a famous sculptress, who were working not to make a "big seller" for the store, but solely to design a lamp of truly artistic proportions, with real grace, symmetry and beauty yet of great practicability.



Aurora
\$3.50

The price of this artistic gem is \$3.50. Think of it! In the few shops where lamps of this character can be found its equal would cost from \$15 to \$20. Only the Decorative Arts League could offer such a price and such a lamp. "Aurora" is 16 inches high, base and cap cast in solid Medallium, shaft of seamless brass, finished either in rich statuary bronze with adjustable parchment shade of neutral brown or in ivory white, shade golden yellow. Inside of shades old rose to give mellow light. Equipped for electricity, wire, socket, etc., everything but bulb. Send no money, simply sign and mail the coupon in Decorative Arts League, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York.

DECORATIVE ARTS LEAGUE,

(S.S.)

175 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

Send me at the League members' special price, an "Aurora" Lamp, and I will pay postman \$3.50 plus the postage when delivered. (Shipping weight only 5 lbs.) If not satisfactory I can return lamp within five days and you are to refund my money.

Check finish desired—Statuary Bronze ☐ or Ivory White ☐

Signed _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

**LOOK AROUND!
EVERYBODY'S USING**

WHITING-ADAMS BRUSHES

A Merry-go-round of Brushes.
There are thousands of kinds and sizes of
WHITING-ADAMS BRUSHES
Your dealer sells them or will quickly get them for you.

Send for illustrated literature
JOHN L. WHITING - J. J. ADAMS CO., Boston, U.S.A.
Brush Makers for Over 113 Years and the Largest in the World.

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Deformed 7 Years by Infantile Paralysis

Frances Hall's condition after 5½ months at McLain Sanitarium astonished those who knew her as a cripple for 7 years. Read her parents' letter:

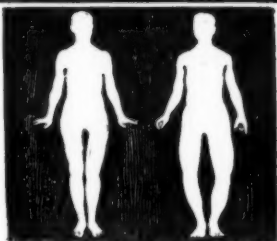
It hardly seems possible that Frances' foot could be so changed in 5½ months. Her heel was ¾ inches from the floor when she left home. Now she steps flat on the floor, although slightly lame. Her limb has increased in size, is straight and she has good use of it. All her friends think it is almost a miracle.

MR. AND MRS. R. S. HALL,
Franklinville, New York.

FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

The McLain Sanitarium is a thoroughly equipped private institution devoted exclusively to the treatment of Club Feet, Infantile Paralysis, Spinal Disease and Deformities, Wry Neck, Hip Disease, Diseases of the joints, especially as found in children and young adults. Our Book, "Deformities and Paralysis" and "Book of References" sent free.

The L. C. McLain Orthopedic Sanitarium
954 Aubert Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.



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is now more than ever the key-note of success. Bow-Legged and Knock-Kneed men and women, both young and old, will be glad to hear that I have now ready for market my new appliance, which will successfully straighten, within a short time, bow-leggedness and knock-kneed legs, safely, quickly and permanently, without pain, operation or discomfort. Will not interfere with your daily work, being worn at night. My new "Lim-Straitner," Model 18, U. S. Patent, is easy to adjust; its result will save you soon from further humiliation, and improve your personal appearance 100 per cent.

Write today for my free copyrighted physiological and anatomical book which tells you how to correct bow and knock-kneed legs without any obligation on your part. Enclose a dime for postage.

M. TRILETT, SPECIALIST

398 L. Askermen Building

BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

Skin Troubles — Soothed — With Cuticura

Soap, Ointment, Talcum, &c. everywhere. Samples free of Cuticura Laboratories, Dept. D, Malden, Mass.

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Earn \$2,000 to \$8,000 a year in this world's fastest growing industry

Never has a field expanded with such amazing rapidity! Almost overnight Radio has become one of our greatest industries. Already it has revolutionized communication. Millions of dollars are being invested in it—and yet Radio is just in its infancy! The future offers infinitely greater development. This is indeed an Age of Radio!

Unlimited Opportunities for the Far-sighted

Just as thousands who started in "the telephone game" when it was new, today are holding the big positions in that field, so the man who enters Radio today will reap the rewards from its tremendous expansion.

Get into Radio now. Thousands of men specially trained in Radio are needed—mechanics, designers, demonstrators, salesmen, instructors, engineers, operators, executives, etc. In all parts of the country, on land and sea, wonderful opportunities are presenting themselves—opportunities which offer splendid futures as well as attractive rewards in money and happiness now.

You Can Easily Qualify

No matter how limited your knowledge of radio is now, you can quickly qualify for one of the better positions in Radio. In a few short weeks spare time at home you can prepare yourself for one of these opportunities that offer splendid pay and rapid advancement.

Send for Free Book

Learn more about the wonderful opportunities in Radio. Send for new Free Book on Radio which has just been prepared. This gives full details on the opportunities in Radio and explains how you can prepare for them right at home in your spare time. Mail coupon for Free Book today!

NATIONAL RADIO INSTITUTE

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National Radio Institute:

Dept. 39B, Washington, D. C.

Kindly send me your illustrated new Free Book which tells all about the opportunities for earning big money in Radio, and describes how the National Radio Institute can qualify me quickly and in spare time at home for one of these positions and your special short time offer.

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City.....State.....

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Accept "Bayer Tablets of Aspirin" only. Each unbroken package contains proper directions. Handy boxes of twelve tablets cost few cents. Druggists also sell bottles of 24 and 100. Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monoaceticacidester of Salicylicacid.

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History of the World War

BY THOMAS R. BEST

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Here's a Prescription for Coughs

For quick relief try PISO'S—A most effective syrup different from all others. Safe and sane for young and old. Pleasant—no opiates—no upset stomach. 35c and 60c sizes obtainable everywhere.

PISO'S—For Coughs & Colds

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*"The Magazine
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Is to the ears what glasses are to the eyes. Write for Free Booklet containing testimonials of users all over the country. It describes causes of deafness; tells how and why the MORLEY PHONE affords relief. Over one hundred thousand sold.

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Deaf Can Hear Says Science

New Invention Aids Thousands

Here's good news for all who suffer from deafness. The Dictograph Products Corporation announces the perfection of a remarkable device which has enabled thousands of deaf persons to hear as well as ever. The makers of this wonderful device say it is too much to expect you to believe this so they are going to give you a chance to try it at home. They offer to send it by prepaid parcel post on a ten-day free trial. They do not send it C. O. D.—they require no deposit—there is no obligation.

They send it entirely at their own expense and risk. They are making this extraordinary offer well knowing that the magic of this little instrument will so amaze and delight the user that the chances of its being returned are very slight. Thousands have already accepted this offer and report most gratifying results. There's no longer any need that you should endure the mental and physical strain which comes from a constant effort to hear. Now you can mingle with your friends without that feeling of sensitivity from which all deaf persons suffer. Now you can take your place in the social and business world to which your talents entitle you and from which your affliction has, in a measure, excluded you. Just send your name and address to The Dictograph Products Corporation, 1381 Candler Building, New York, for descriptive literature and request blank.

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7 Diamond \$2.00 Solitaire 2 Down

Seven perfectly cut, blue white Diamonds are so closely set in Platinum, and so exquisite is the workmanship that the solitaire resemblance is actually startling. Looks like a 2 ct. single Diamond. Don't send us a penny—we'll send the Ring without one penny in advance. If satisfied, pay \$2.00, then send the balance in ten months, \$5.50 a month. If not satisfied, return. (Can be furnished in men's setting without extra charge).

FREE

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THE HOUSE OF QUALITY
CAPITAL \$1,000,000

L.W. SWEET INC.

1650-1660 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

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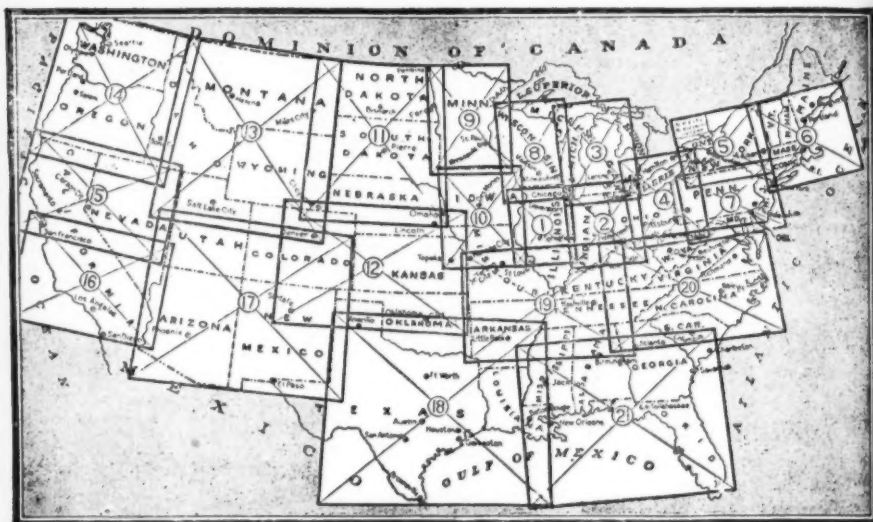
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To Readers of this Magazine

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 DIAMONDS WIN HEARTS

GENUINE DIAMONDS, BLUE WHITE, PERFECT CUT
 Rich 18-K Solid White Gold Mountings, pierced and carved.
 Wonderful \$75 \$100 \$150 \$200
 Values at When ordering rings shown above, give name and price.
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 Stores in Leading Cities

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For quick relief try **PISO'S**—A most effective syrup different from all others. Safe and sane for young and old. Pleasant—no opiates—no upset stomach. 35c and 60c sizes obtainable everywhere.
PISO'S—For Coughs & Colds

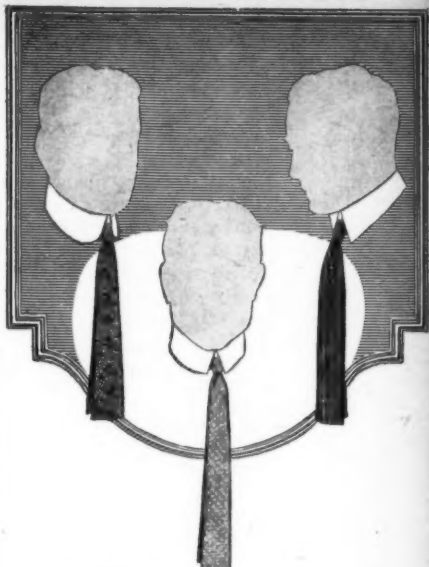
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REMARKABLY good to look at are these new Cheney Cravats for Spring. Their good looks result from their distinctive up-to-the-minute patterns; their long wearing qualities come from their sturdy construction and carefully woven fabric.

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Cheney Tubulars are famous for the sturdy service they give. Your haberdasher has them.

CHENEY BROTHERS, NEW YORK
 Makers of Cheney Silks

CHENEY
CRAVATS

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FICTION

*"The world's a theater, the earth a stage,
Which God and nature do with actors fill."*

When Thomas Heywood made that observation, nearly five hundred years ago, he uttered a truism which finds ready response in every human heart. The world *is* a theater, the earth *is* a stage. What is it that enables us to see the characters in the play in all their virtue, with all their vices, to laud or condemn their hopes, their fears, their aspirations, and their failures? Fiction!

Watch closely this play called life; compare it with fiction you have read. Do they differ in essentials? No, you are forced to disagree with the time-famous banality: "Truth is stranger than fiction." You find, after all, that fiction is really truth—word pictures of characters and their emotions which are paralleled in human beings.

In life, some characters are clothed in fine raiment, some in tatters; some give before they take, while others demand payment before it is due. As we wander along the broad highway, we come in contact with both good and bad folks; as we read, we constantly meet the same kinds of people in all their virtue and vice. Assuredly, fiction is but a mirror which faithfully reflects life.

Since fiction may be made to deal with either the good or bad, with the strong or the weak, the moral tone of a fiction magazine is merely a matter of choice, or of character, with the author and publisher. Our old copy book at school did more than teach us to write. It hammered home truths which still guide us in our conduct of life. Whether consciously or not is aside the question. The line in our personal copy book which impressed us most is this: "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and it is just as true to-day as it was then.

STREET & SMITH CORPORATION,

FICTION

Feeling the force of this truth, when it came to making a choice as to whether the fiction published by us would be clean or otherwise, we chose cleanliness because we felt that aside from the moral issue, we could make a financial success of clean reading, just as we might have made much money from fiction of the leprous type which finds so prominent a place in many American periodicals.

Publishing in any form carries with it great responsibility. The printed word gains ready admittance where the spoken word cannot. No home, no office, no sanctuary that you can think of presents a closed door to printed matter. It can be carried anywhere. It is welcomed everywhere, and usually with little suspicion. Knowing as we do the tremendous power exerted by fiction upon the morality of a nation, we feel that the publishing of fiction, exclusively, brings with it a responsibility which we do not consider or treat lightly.

This firm was founded in 1855. During the sixty-seven years of its existence, cleanliness in the published word has been its aim, and in the sixty millions of magazines which come from our presses every year the reader can find nothing to offend good taste, nothing to corrupt good manners.

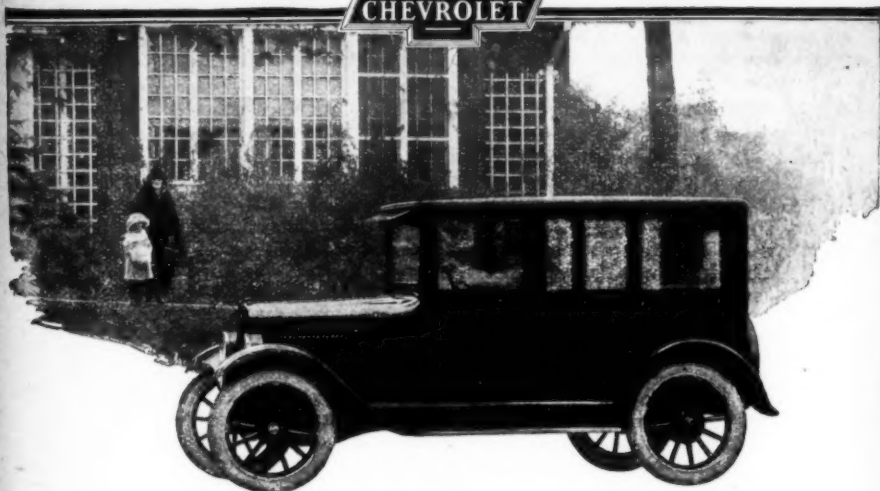
Is our fiction strong in interest? Yes, because fiction of the Street & Smith type clothes its characters in the habits and attributes of human beings; places virtue before all else; punishes vice wherever it is found. It makes the man, woman or youthful reader better for having read. It projects rays of light into lives which otherwise would be dark, enabling the reader to transform into pleasant hours, spare time which would have been dull and unprofitable. It invariably helps him to see far beyond his narrow horizon, to escape, as it were, from the shackles of diurnal drudgery into realms of wholesome romance, love, and adventure.

That has been the mission of the Street & Smith Corporation fiction for a period of sixty-seven years.

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Chevrolet Offers Quality at Quantity Prices

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Especially in the closed models, the price advantage of quantity production is most apparent.

Chevrolet is the world's largest pro-

ducer of closed cars with Fisher Bodies, hence is able to offer these high grade closed automobiles at astonishingly low prices.

Think of pleasing design, high quality construction, modern engineering that ensures power, ease and economy—then see the cars that embody all these features at the showroom of any Chevrolet dealer.

CHEVROLET MOTOR COMPANY

Division of General Motors Corporation

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There are now more than 10,000 Chevrolet dealers and service stations throughout the world

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300-ft Range



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"... that's right. My Eveready Flashlight is as necessary as my traveling bag"

Wherever you are, wherever you go, the Eveready Flashlight is the one light you can have with you. Always ready to meet every need for light.

It needs no imagination to picture its countless uses in sight-seeing. It helps avoid mistakes. It prevents accidents. It is the only light you can carry in wind and rain, as steady and clear in a gale as a calm.

Whether you travel by land or sea; whether you are fishing, hunting, sailing, boating, or just motoring near home, it is common prudence to have an Eveready Flashlight. Instant light when you need it, right where you want it, it is literally the light of a thousand uses.

An Eveready Flashlight costs from \$1.35 to \$4.50. One use often repays the cost a thousandfold.



Eveready Flashlight Batteries fit and improve all makes of flashlights; they give a brighter light; they last longer.



When you select your Compact

Think how many times a day people see your face powder Compact! A beautiful box is an evidence to your friends of your good taste.

This new large Colgate Compact is exquisite enough to be the product of an exclusive jeweler. Its polished gold-

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The powder comes in three shades—white, flesh and rachel.

A refill with a new puff can be purchased for considerably less than the complete Compact.

For sale at your favorite toilet goods counter.

COLGATE & CO.

Established 1806

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These four monogram styles have been designed by a well-known New York jeweler, after careful study of the box, as being appropriate for this new and distinctive Colgate Compact.

Your box can be engraved by your jeweler at small cost.

